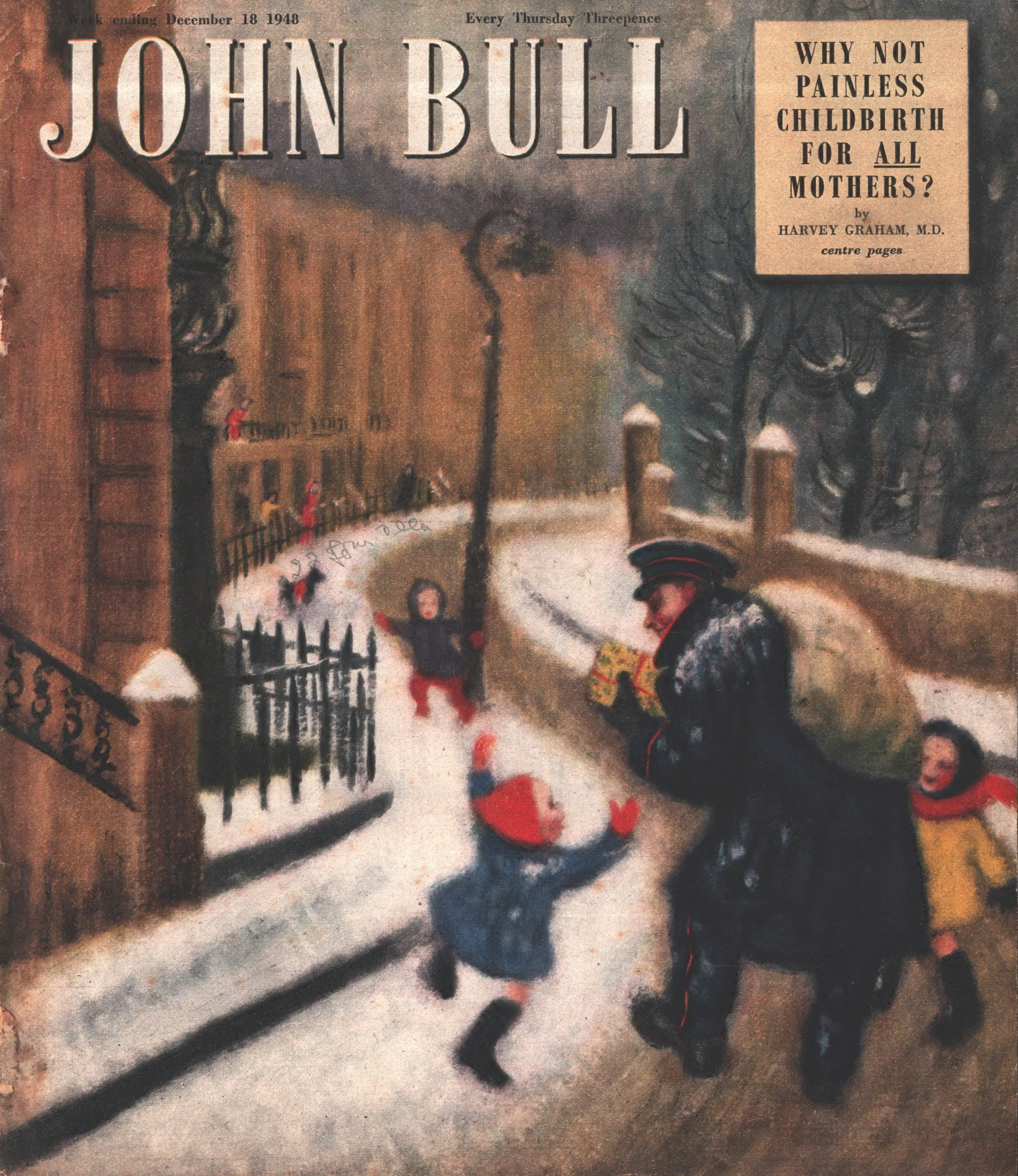
Week ending December 18 1948 Every Thursday Threepence

JOHN BULL

WHY NOT PAINLESS CHILDBIRTH FOR ALL MOTHERS?

by HARVEY GRAHAM, M.D.

centre pages



When Christmas-pudding-time comes near
Let Indigestion disappear.

Let Stomach Pain, Acidity,
With all our cares and troubles be
Forgotten 'mid the day's good cheer . . .
Just suck two Rennies, one by one
And guard against the sad surprise
Which turkey, pudding, and mince pies
May bring IF EATING'S OVERDONE

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There's another value in Zebo, too. *Experts say that a black surface throws out more heat than almost any other.* So you get more heat from your fire if you give the firebricks and surrounds a regular coating of Zebo.

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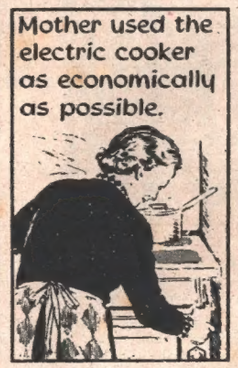

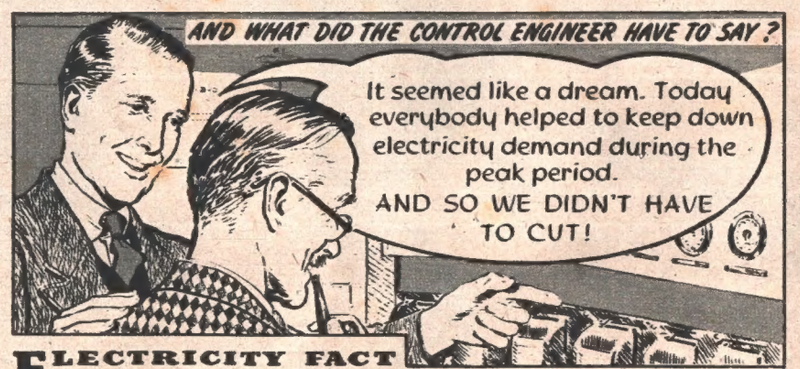
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It seemed like a dream. Today everybody helped to keep down electricity demand during the peak period.
AND SO WE DIDN'T HAVE TO CUT!

ELECTRICITY FACT

To avoid electricity cuts this winter, industry aims to reduce its Peak Load demand by 30%—by spreading the load to other times of day. Commercial offices and shops, with less scope for economy, are organising for a 20% economy of demand. Domestic consumers can make or mar these efforts by careful or wasteful use of electricity. Keep *your* demand "Off-Peak".

(*British Electricity*)

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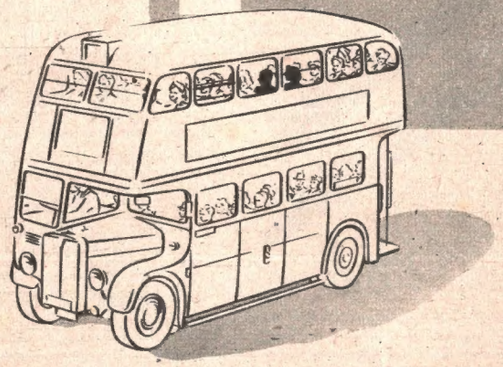
At least 2 people in every bus



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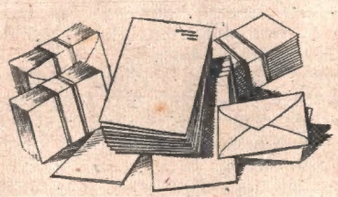

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SUCK THEM WHEN YOU LIKE—YOU CAN'T HELP LIKING THEM!

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1/4 a packet **(NO POINTS)** from all Chemists. A Maclean Product.

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Johnny wouldn't write home until someone gave him a Major balltip Pen. Silken-smooth writing. Absolutely unbreakable. Fully guaranteed. Easy self-refills. The ideal gift — treat yourself to one.

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COOKING on the high wire was risky even for the great Blondin! But you need never gamble with sugar, fats or other precious ingredients — thanks to Bird's Golden Raising Powder!

Use it in cakes, sponges, puddings —wherever you would normally use eggs. Even without them it gives a rich, golden colour — deliciously tempting!

For pastry, scones and suet crust, use Bird's Baking Powder . . . and make every baking day a glorious success!

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DECEMBER 18, 1948 VOLUME 84 NUMBER 2216

Overtaxed Christmas?

IN MANY WAYS, THIS CHRISTMAS offers better and brighter prospects than any we have had since the war.

There is a little more food about, as well as a good deal more to drink and a great many more presents and toys of all kinds. The snag—and a serious one—is that money is too tight to allow for much enjoyment of these "extras."

In spite of wage increases, most fathers of families are desperately hard up. So far as they are concerned, there could not possibly be a buying spree this month, however full the shops were. Prices are just too high to allow of the slightest departure from normal spending.

Now, this is all very correct from the point of view of economic theory. No doubt it is helping us, as a country, to turn the corner, and is part of the price we have to pay for our eventual recovery from the war. Everybody now realizes that we must continue to export a lot of the things we should like for ourselves, and that some limit must therefore be set to the home sales of most goods.

But the continued high price of many available articles is due almost entirely to the high rate of purchase tax, around which controversy continually rages.

It has been truly said of this tax that there is no more powerful deterrent to spending. If Sir Stafford Cripps is satisfied (and only he has all the facts and figures) that we still need such a stern deterrent, then there is nothing more to be said.

But we speak for millions when we remind the Chancellor that a measure of further relief from this tax would be the best Christmas present he could offer the nation.

And we hope that *every* possibility of easing the burden of high prices and rising costs is being kept under constant review by the Government.

Too Much of a Gamble

MR. ATTLEE IS CONSIDERING setting up a Royal Commission on gambling. It is, in fact, high time that several absurd inconsistencies in our gambling laws were ended.

For instance, a Royal Commission could recommend that we stop the leakage of nearly £1,500,000 a year smuggled out of this country for sweepstake tickets.

It could also advise a strict ban, rigidly enforced, on illegal betting at boxing matches—a dirty blot on a first-class sport.

At the same time, the Commission might consider giving a better deal to the small punter. The shilling-each-way man places a bet furtively in the street. A policeman waits to pounce on the kerbside bookie. Meantime a more affluent gambler phones his bet from the comfort of office or home—and is safely within the law.

Our laws in this respect are so outdated that many a man organizing a simple raffle with a Christmas goose as prize may find himself an unhappy defendant in the January police courts.

These ridiculous regulations only lead people to treat the law itself with contempt.

Clear Up These Crossings

WE CALL THE ATTENTION of the British Transport Commission to the dangers of railway level crossings.

There are far too many of these crossings — hundreds where railways intersect with public roads, as well as more than 20,000 "occupational crossings" where farms and factories have rights on both sides of the line.

Accidents are increasing. Delays we have always suffered.

Now that the railways and part of our road transport are nationalised, these evils should be tackled.

What we need is a nationwide plan to replace all level crossings by ramps and bridges, either over or under the railways, as quickly as labour and materials permit.

This is an untidy and dangerous part of our transport system which has never been cleared up. Now is the time to start.

Freedom to Fish

THERE ARE MORE THAN two million Englishmen, Scotsmen and Welshmen who fish for pleasure, and most of them are confined to poor waters by the high prices landowners charge for rivers and lakes.

In Scotland a great opportunity occurs to give the poor angler a new deal. The hydro-electric scheme now in construction will create many new lochs, which are to be stocked with fish. There, it is to be hoped, angling will be free to all—subject, of course, to safeguards against greedy commercial fishermen.

In the south, with many rivers polluted and made barren by industrial poisons, the fishing space remains small and mostly expensive.

Here is a chance for the Government to apply its principles in a manner which nearly everyone will approve.

And if, at the same time as fishing rights were controlled and made freely available to all, the English rivers were cleaned and restocked, we should gain in both ways.

Electric Shocks

EVERY HOUSEHOLDER would be glad if electrical gadgets such as plugs were more thoroughly standardized.

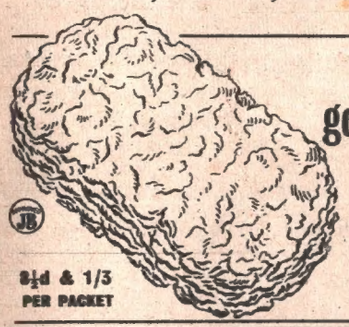
Today they are not cheap; and anyone who moves house with the usual collection of fires, irons and lamps may have to buy a new set of plugs just when he wants all his money for carpets and curtains.

What a waste of money and material! There would soon be an outcry if electric bulb sockets came in odd, unpredictable sizes. They were standardized because lighting was the first great domestic use for electricity.

Nowadays most people also use appliances which need plugging in.

So it is high time to make sure that one set of plugs will fit any house in the country.

Only the whole wheat grain. . .
malted, salted, and toasted. . .



goes into **Weetabix**

Weetabix is the whole wheat cereal food that everybody likes, for every meal of the day. Weetabix is delicious with milk and sugar, and just as appetizing and tasty with fruit juices, margarine, jam or a savoury.

8½d & 1/3 PER PACKET

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beautifies the skin wonderfully

THIS NEW WAY of caring for the skin, used by lovely stars of Hollywood and Britain, is a marvellous complexion beautifier. It's so *simple*, and you'll quickly see how it improves the skin.

Make a generous creamy lather with Lux Toilet Soap, and smooth it all over face and neck. Massage gently with an upward, circular movement, working the beautifying lather well in. Rinse well with warm water, then cold. Pat dry with a towel.

After the very first treatment your skin feels smoother, softer. It *looks* more radiant. Get Lux Toilet Soap and start this treatment *now*. In two weeks you'll notice an improvement in your skin. It looks altogether clearer, lovelier!

LUX TOILET SOAP
Used by 9 out of 10 film stars

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Lovely MICHÈLE MORGAN, *starring in London Film Production Ltd.'s "The Fallen Idol," says: "I depend on Lux Toilet Soap massage technique to keep my skin smooth, clear and flawless."*

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A DELICIOUS WAY TO GET

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The biggest little meal in Britain

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Shoes for women

are graceful, stylish and particularly comfortable. They are the ideal shoes for the housewife and business woman.
Ask for them by name.

'Oral'- *Makers of good shoes* - Rushden, Northants.

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SENSATIONAL HAIR-WAVING DISCOVERY. The £3.3.0 Perm for only **15/-**

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HOME COLD PERM OUTFIT

SALON-TYPE OUTFIT - 15/- (inc. tax)
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AT ALL CHEMISTS AND STORES

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Because Sylvan dissolves instantly even in cool water — no harmful hot water to ruin gay and dainty colours. Then Sylvan whisks up to the richest lather ever, so there's no harsh rubbing to shrink and mat delicate, fleecy wool . . . just easy, gentle squeezing in the purest, mildest suds — that's why only a soap like Sylvan can keep your precious woollens softer, fleecier, lovelier.

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SYLVAN CARE

Aching head?..stomach wrong?..

Alka Seltzer

Alka-Seltzer... life's a song!..

Head throbbing? Feeling all in? An Alka-Seltzer tablet in a glass of water (hot or cold) will soon set you right. First, Alka-Seltzer's double-action soothes pain—extra fast. Then it neutralises excess acid, often the root of your distress. Try it! Millions sold yearly.

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NEURITIS
I've ever taken

Why do I take a laxative for relief from Neuritis? Because Fynnon Salt *really does bring me relief!* I know it brings relief to many others, too. Fynnon does more than remove waste from the intestines. It increases the fluid outflow from the kidneys—so removing a likely cause of rheumatic aches and pains: LUMBAGO, FIBROSITIS, SCIATICA, NEURITIS and GOUT. Try this famous Fynnon Salt yourself. 2/- a large tin.

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will relieve NEURITIS, LUMBAGO, SCIATICA, RHEUMATISM or GOUT

Fynnon Limited, Brentford, Middx.

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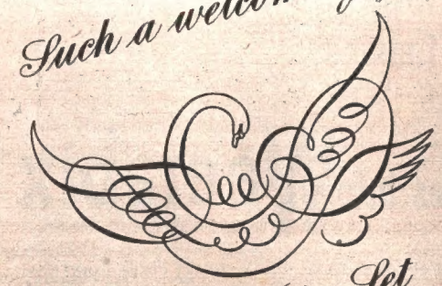
A WINTER'S NIGHT and there, in the glass of beer you are drinking, glints some of the long summer sunshine. What grand company malt and hops make for each other when the brewers' art goes hand in hand with the farmers' untiring skill!

Beers brewed by
WHITBREAD
Naturally

Such a welcome gift!



A Swan Twin Set

The Swan — that famous pen made with the precision of a fine watch — has now a partner in the Swan pencil. By their good service, both will keep gratitude warm for many years.

PRESENTATION SETS
FROM 41/- TO 72/9 inc. tax

Pens and pencils in black and 4 colours. Leatherette case free.

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BIGGEST RADIO NEWS for YEARS!

New fashion in table radiograms—the Regentone '99'—a marvel of compact efficiency and real beauty. The gramophone is *built-in* under the set and gives magnificent reproduction from 10-in. or 12-in. records—a permanent Sapphire needle is also fitted. Close the flap, turn a switch, and you have a first-class five-valve all-wave superhet, with size and appearance of an attractive Table Model. And all this for 37 gns. including tax. *See your dealer today.*

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chew a couple of
'MILK of MAGNESIA' (REGD.) TABLETS

By correcting acidity they give prompt relief from indigestion. * 'Milk of Magnesia' Tablets are handy to carry in handbag or pocket.

* *Trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.*

30 Tablets 1/3 — 75 Tablets 2/6

Did you MACLEAN your teeth today?

It's a good tip

Macleans Peroxide Tooth Paste
Large tube, 1/4
Use a
MACLEANS TOOTHBRUSH 1/4
(Nylon or Bristle)

SCIENCE COULD BREAK THE BARRIERS

by RITCHIE CALDER

In the face of pestilence and famine, "isms" are forgotten. A leading scientific writer suggests how a world truce would enable science to break the barriers of ignorance

RECENTLY, IN THE ruins of Warsaw, a Polish scientist said bitterly to me, "If only *they* would let us get on with our job. . . ."

I did not see his Party card, but, from the position he holds, it is a safe bet that he is "ideologically sound." But the "they" about whom he complained were the same "they" about whom scientists the world over have a grievance—the politicos (on both sides of the Iron Curtain) who, in this "cold war," have introduced secrecy and suspicion into science and divided brother scientists.

In Poland you have the unanswerable argument for a world truce and for the advantages which such a truce would bring. For Poland is a scientific "no-man's-land," abandoned between East and West.

It is regarded as being behind the Soviet Iron Curtain, but, as that same scientist said to me, "As far as science is concerned, the Iron Curtain runs east of Poland." There is no two-way traffic either in scientific information or materials, or in academic assistance, between Poland and the U.S.S.R. At the same time, because of the worsening political situation, Poland is also being cut off from the West.

The arguments for world truce are realistic; they accept the uncomfortable facts and try to make the best of them. We agree about the differences and then agree to disagree.

The facts about Poland are stark enough. It is a Catholic country, where religious faith has to come to terms with political expediency. It was a Moscow-trained Communist who went out of his way to show me a cathedral which had been rebuilt while acres of homes all round it still lay in ruins.

Textbooks are English

Culturally and scientifically, Poland belongs to the Western tradition and tries hard to be the bridge between East and West.

Nine-tenths of the medical and scientific textbooks are in English and only recently, at the centenary of the Polish Academy, the Minister of Education, following the party line, warned the Polish scientists that this dependence on English textbooks had to stop, although he had to admit that finding Russian substitutes would be difficult.

I saw a large institute in Warsaw laboriously reconstructed for the teaching of science. It was besieged by students, anxious for the scientific training which would best equip them to help Poland. In the whole of that huge building, there were *two* instruments—a chemical balance and a polarimeter, which had been contrived with, among other "job lots," a magic lantern belonging to a professor's son.

The graduation-year students had no equipment to handle. They knew the tools of their trade only from hearsay and from textbooks.

In Cracow they are trying to start a modern physics department. A distinguished Polish physicist has abandoned his well-equipped laboratory in America to go back to help his country.

But he is up against snags. The Cracow College needs such things as geiger counters. Geiger counters are used to detect the passage of atomic particles, including cosmic rays which come from outer space and in the study of which the Cracow physicists have made notable contributions. These counters are as harmless as a doctor's stethoscope, but, since they are used in connection with atomic energy, they are barred by law from export to Eastern Europe from the U.S.A.

The ban, I was told, was being applied also by Marshall Aid countries, and the Russians were not forthcoming. So, before they can get on with their job, Polish scientists will have to make these and similar instruments themselves. It is like having to make your own electric light bulb before you can read a book.

It is crazy. If it were not for the welter of suspicion we could do a great deal to help Polish science and education. All that is needed is for a British university to throw open its teaching laboratories to the Polish students and their Polish professors during the vacation—just to let them handle their instruments and finish their training. But, without a truce, we should probably refuse the Poles entrance visas, and their own Government, in its present mood, would not give them exit permits.

Czech child is inoculated with French vaccine in campaign against T.B. by team of international workers. Can't co-operation go farther?

Trust has Gone

This is a bad and terrible thing to have happened to the great commonwealth of science. Through the centuries scientists have treated each other as trusted colleagues. Now, what is true of Poland is, in varying measures, true of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia and Russia itself.

The U.S.S.R., with certain exceptions (like the Geological Congress to which they sent a large contingent this year), gives few facilities for its scientists to travel or for foreign scientists to visit. Even such an ardent Marxist as Professor J. B. S. Haldane has had to appeal to them for more exchanges of persons and of information.

A world truce would have to accept the fact that the U.S.A. possesses the atomic bomb and is rigidly guarding the "know-how" (even from us and the Canadians, who are supposed to be partners in the Atomic Trust). It would also have to accept the fact that Russia is hell-bent on producing the bomb and is assiduously looking for clues.

But it is also supposed to be a fact, countersigned by Truman, Attlee and Mackenzie King, that scientific information about the nucleus of the atom is free for all. There is no reason, therefore, why the atomic scientists of the whole world, including Russia, should not get together to discuss the scientific facts and the future possibilities.

The Pariah Complex

Such discussion would not provide the Russians with what they need most, the production techniques and the skilled technical personnel. But it would provide them with something which is desperately needed to restore mutual understanding—a sense that they belong to the scientific fraternity and are not pariahs.

Atomic physics is the most difficult area in which to re-establish relations, without transgressing the military-political conditions of a world truce. But it can safely be done and is absolutely necessary if the prevailing scientific schizophrenia—the split-mind of science—is not to persist.

And remember that it is not only the Russians who are involved in the welter of

suspicion. It has corrupted our relations with our American colleagues, who are forever haunted by the shuffle of the gumshoes of the G-men and terrorized by the threat of the Committee on Un-American Activities.

A truce which re-established the "climate" in which the normal interchanges of science could again flourish would be of immediate practical benefit to the whole world. Scientists are not interested in "capturing Poland for the West," for instance, but they are concerned to see that those scientists who happen to live in an area called "Poland" should have facilities for the proper pursuit of science and should not feel themselves outside the scientific commonwealth.

The Lysenko Fuss

They want to restore practical relations with the Russians on terms which have nothing to do with ideology. They want to clear up misunderstandings. For instance, there is the controversy over Lysenko. He is a plant-biologist who has done some quite remarkable things in improving Russian crops, which has given him a powerful, popular following among the collective farmers, has made him the Vice-President of the Council of the Soviets and President of the Academy of Agriculture.

But it has also given him (even from official accounts) extraordinary ideas which cut across the accepted principles of practically all his colleagues outside Russia.

Those who disagree with him inside are either removed from their posts or forced to recant their "heresy" in not accepting his tenets.

The whole truth is not known, because accounts even of his work which has been manifestly successful have not been exposed to the examination of his fellow-scientists elsewhere.

We might be able to benefit by what is valuable in Lysenko's work and the Russian scientists would certainly benefit if they were able to have the moral support of their colleagues outside.

That is eminently true in many other branches of science as well. If we had a truce and scientists could "cross the lines," and if the Russian scientists did not feel (as they mistakenly do) that they are hostages when they leave their own country, a vast amount of scientific knowledge and experience, and, indeed, goodwill, could be exchanged.

Practical Benefits

But the common man is not particularly interested in a truce which merely eases scientific get-togethers (though, believe me, that would be a great advance towards saner understanding). He wants practical benefits.

He can have them—in plenty.

An ideological truce would encourage functional internationalism, that is, building the fabric of a sounder world by letting the experts work together on common projects.

Sir John Boyd Orr has already written in JOHN BULL of the opportunities this would offer in tackling the grim problem of the rapidly increasing world population with its pressure on existing food resources. He has shown the possibilities of a World Food Board.

Every nation is both a giver and a receiver in terms of this food problem. Orr sent F.A.O. missions to Poland and Greece and showed how, with material help from outside, both these countries could increase the value and productivity of their soil—Poland, for export; Greece, to reduce its imports, almost to the stage of self-sufficiency.

Russia also stands to benefit, as well as to endow, by co-operation in this field. It has done remarkable things in extending hardy crops from the frozen tundra of the Arctic to the near-deserts of the sub-tropics. It is pre-eminent in the field of soil-mechanics—and the behaviour of the soil is a vital factor in reducing wastage of arable land and in bringing land into cultivation. It has a lot to teach and a lot to learn. And the answers are not found in the works of Karl Marx but in the wealth of practical experience which Russia shares with the rest of the nations.

Or take the problems of health. Fortunately, Russia and her so-called "satellites" are members of the World Health Organization, in which the doctors of the world combine to fight disease and premature death. The times are desperate. The war has left a terrible legacy of disease. Tuberculosis threatens millions. In Czechoslovakia, the privations have riddled the population with consumption. Czechoslovakia has said it cannot cope with this alone. The world's doctors, vaccines and drugs will be made available to it.

Venereal disease has run amok. W.H.O. is also tackling that on a world scale. Malaria can now be stamped out if adequate measures are taken. Yellow fever, sleeping sickness and other insect-borne plagues can be mastered—but only on a world scale, attacking the breeding grounds, saving the victims and preventing the spread.

So, too, with animal diseases—like the rinderpest, which destroys cattle—and with the havoc wrought by vermin and by plant diseases. These are not confined within boundaries—pestilence pays no customs dues and needs no visas.

All Fought Locusts

The plague which attacks a country may originate a thousand miles away. Like locust plagues, which provide an excellent example. During the war, locusts threatened the vital food supplies of the Middle East, involving not only supplies for the Western armies in Africa but also the Caspian shores of Russia.

All nations in the area combined to attack the pests wherever they appeared. The Soviet sent aircraft to spray the breeding grounds. Britain, France, Egypt, Persia, India—Arab and Jew, East and West, joined forces.

That locust control still exists, with Russia a member—but only on paper. There is no need for it to exist in fact—because that combined effort stamped out, at least temporarily, locusts in the Middle East.

When cholera broke out in Egypt, all countries rushed help. When it menaced India, Russia not only sent supplies of serum but sent experts to India who made freely available all their knowledge of its preparation.

Would Ease Tension

If experts were allowed to intervene, without suspicion that they were "agents of American Capitalism," or "of the Kremlin," or hunting for oil concessions, or spreading subversion; if, as international representatives, they lost their national identities, then we could spread the benefits of science and technology and many of the festering political problems of the day could be removed.

Hunger and suffering are the enemies of capitalism, socialism and communism alike. Communists can exploit discontent but so can others. A resentful Poland, frustrated in its attempts at recovery, would, in the event of war, be as embarrassing to the Russians as any Communist activity in the West would be to the Americans.

Irrigation schemes, fertilizers and decent roads would have been a surer bulwark in the Balkans than the futile attempts to build a Greek army.

Science has the ultimate answer to most of our material problems. In its practices, it is independent of the ideologies. It carries the white flag of the World Truce.

HOTEL CRISIS HITS GUESTS

by RICHARD COLLIER

No morning tea? A long wait for lunch? Hotels blame the new regulations. One thing is certain: there will go on being a hotel crisis unless customers get a better deal

A FRIEND OF MINE had lunch recently at an East Coast hotel. At a quarter to one he went into the dining-room to book a table. The head waiter was engrossed in counting spoons, but after a few minutes he deigned to give the guest his attention.

"I'll come in at one o'clock sharp," said my friend. "Where shall I sit?"

The head waiter shrugged. "Sit?" he said. "Sit where you like"—and he went on counting spoons.

Punctually at one o'clock my friend arrived back in the dining-room and ordered some sherry. The waiter who brought it spilt some on the cloth. Instead of offering to mop it up or make good the loss, he remarked, "That's torn it," and vanished.

Four people walked out before lunch, complaining that they had waited twenty minutes without a waiter coming near them. The head waiter shrugged and let them go.

Mrs. Mopp—Waitress

The lunch, as it happened, was very bad indeed. When it was over my friend went to the lounge for coffee. He waited a quarter of an hour before it was brought to him "by an old woman in an overall who looked like Mrs. Mopp," and whose hands were none too clean.

Then he went to see the manager in his office and asked him how he got away with serving such bad food so indifferently at such high prices.

"That's all very well," said the manager. "I know I ought to be out there seeing that things are going smoothly. But these wage increases and regulations are so complicated that it sometimes takes me thirty-six hours to work them out. And because of the wage increases I've had to cut my staff of twenty down to eight and put up my prices to try to offset my losses."

Now that may have been an extreme case, but it is an example of how the Catering Wages Act is—all unwittingly—preventing the hotel keeper from giving the public good service.

Ten per cent of the hotels which were open for Christmas last year will be closed this year. For many hotels it will be the blackest, gloomiest Christmas they have ever known.

Nor is the problem merely seasonal. By introducing a mass of complicated regulations affecting pay and hours of work, the Catering Wages Act has made it impossible for many hotels to carry on at all.

One of the biggest hotel chains in the country, with interests in 230 houses, has already closed thirty of them. Some hotels in Devon and Cornwall will not be opening again until June. Those hotels which are staying open have dismissed two-thirds of their staff. Twenty thousand hotel workers are unemployed.

In the long run, the Act is hitting hardest at the people on whom the employers and workers alike depend for the livelihood: the guests.

Just what are the complaints against the Act?

First, the question of wages. For a forty-eight hour working week, the Act lays down a basic minimum wage for ninety grades of hotel workers—and the wage scales vary even from town to town. While the employer in his back room is wrestling with calculations that often involve fractions of a farthing, things are going on in the hotel of which he may be quite unaware.

Many hotels find their wages bills are up by at least twenty per cent. So they have abolished the ten per cent service charge and put up their prices by ten per cent. The customer pays more—but gets less for it.

I talked with the proprietor of a small luxury hotel in Sussex. It is visited by tourists from places as far apart as Nigeria and U.S.A., and the proprietor reckons that seventy per cent of all his guests come either on recommendation or on repeat visits.

"That means," he says, "that you've always got to keep up a standard. It means paying great attention to detail."

To keep up that standard as well as they can, the proprietor and his wife, both over sixty, work ninety hours apiece each week. They employ a cook, a waitress, a chambermaid and a housekeeper to serve sixteen residents, who occupy ten letting bedrooms. Since the wages scheme came into force, they have been unable to afford the two extra staff they need, so they do these jobs themselves.

Must Eat to Drink

En pension terms at this hotel are around six and a half guineas per week in the winter, as high as nine and a half in the summer. As the hotel has only a table licence, no drinks can be served except with a meal. Thus liquor sales account for less than a tenth of the profits. From this it follows that they find it uneconomical to serve any meal, even tea, to non-residents, and casual customers who drop in for lunch or dinner often have to be disappointed.

The hotel is keeping open for Christmas this year, but to accomplish that the owner is having to raise his charges

Mrs. Giles, Margate hotel keeper, has had to make staff cuts

by ten per cent. He plans to let his staff go off and to do the bulk of the work himself.

"There'll be no festivities," he says. "I can't afford them. The takings during the past year have just about paid my expenses."

Like many other hotel keepers, he is hampered in the amount of good service he can give by the problem of "spreadover." For the Catering Wages Act lays down that in cases where the hours of work are spread over more than twelve hours (and less than fourteen) the employee must be paid an additional ten per cent of his wages.

Overtime rates are paid at a time and a quarter for the first six hours beyond the eight, a time and a half for the next three hours, with a payment of double time after that.

In London hotels customers are less badly hit by "spreadovers." In the first place, accommodation is always at a premium. Secondly, a hotel with eighty-odd bedrooms and a staff of twenty-five can usually arrange things so that no employee's hours of duty exceed twelve.

At the moment, the Hotels and Restaurants Association, representing some 3,500 hotels, and the Caterers' Association of Great Britain, representing 25,000 miscellaneous establishments, are analysing the answers to a questionnaire they have circulated.

One of the questions they asked the hotels was just how the "spreadover" regulation was restricting their service.

I can tell you how it is restricting some of the small hotels, because since March I have stayed in just over forty of them.

It is making them insist that no breakfast shall be served before eight o'clock and no dinner after seven o'clock at night.

It is making them cut out early morning tea. It is making them forbid their staffs to fill hot-water bottles, draw curtains or turn down sheets. It is forcing them to remove the bells from guests' bedrooms.

A commercial traveller whom I know tells me he has given up patronizing the small "family-and-commercial" where we often used to enjoy a glass of beer together. He has moved on to the bigger hotels where he can be sure of early morning tea and breakfast at seven thirty.

One in Twenty Open

It seems fair to say that the Catering Wages Act, as it stands at present, is too inflexible. It makes no distinction, for instance, between the London hotel and the hardest hit of all hotels—the seaside hotel.

At Margate, only one in every twenty hotels is now open. As Mrs. B. M. Giles, proprietress of the Athelstan House Private Hotel (thirty-one bedrooms) pointed out to me, the hotels are Margate's only industry, and, moreover, a seasonal industry. They work hardest and make their profits in the summer. But the Catering Wages Act requires that workers shall take their holidays during the normal holiday season. So Margate's hotel keepers have faced a decline not only in their profits but in the standard of service they can offer guests.

The Act aggravates one of the hotel keeper's biggest problems—finding and keeping good staff.

Mrs. E. F. Vivian, proprietress of "Carisbrooke," another Margate hotel, told me: "I may find a good girl in the summer, but no sooner have I got her on my staff than I have to dismiss her. If I keep her on until next Whitsun at the new rates I'm just accumulating unnecessary overheads."

An even worse headache is the regulation on holiday rates. This problem is the crux of the Christmas shut-down, for the Act says that when a full-time worker goes on duty "on a day of customary holiday" (Christmas or bank holiday) and doesn't get a day off later, he must be paid treble time.

Consequently, at the very time a hotel needs to do its utmost to make guests comfortable, it is crippled—either by shortage of staff or by heavy overtime payments.

Take the case of Mrs. Giles. Before the war her staff totalled sixteen. She used to keep them on during the winter and give them holidays with pay. Now she has had to cut them down to six, is raising her charges at Christmas and is employing none of the half-dozen part-time experts she employed formerly, such as the cake-icers and tree-trimmers.

Specialized and Personal

It seems as if the Catering Wages Commission, in its zeal to promote a new deal for the workers, has brought about a situation in which few hotels can give guests anything like a fair return for their money.

Hotels are a specialized industry. Because the service is a highly personal one, the problems are highly personal, too. There must be willingness to work all out at certain times, while relaxing at others.

One manager of a south coast hotel summed it up like this: "You've got to be on your feet at all the hours God sends. You've got to be just as pleased to see guests at eleven thirty at night as you are at eleven thirty in the morning."

But the Catering Wages Act says the employer must pay an additional twenty-five per cent for all night work. I met a night porter at a Doncaster hotel who told me he earned £5 to £6 a week while the day porter earned £3 10s. Consequently few of the smaller hotels can afford to keep a night porter, and late arrivals, even if they can secure admittance, are made to feel they are a thundering nuisance.

What do the hotel workers feel about it?

Are they satisfied with the new conditions, or are they gradually becoming aware of a rather strained relationship between guests and themselves?

Most staff complaints come from waiters and chambermaids. They say that during their off-duty hours they are no longer on hand to receive tips from departing guests. One waiter in a Birmingham hotel told me that his income from tips was down by fifty per cent.

Many of them find that guests are less inclined, anyway, to tip these days, since they are no longer getting coveted "extras." This in turn has bred resentment among staffs, a feeling that it doesn't pay to give guests good service, since employees who work on the "ca' canny" system command the same basic rates.

Chef Who Was Keen

In Lincolnshire I came across a revealing example of how staff enthusiasm is being damped. I met a chef who was keen enough on his job to want to be in the kitchen for the greater part of the working day. His employer, who could not afford to pay him overtime, was trying to discourage him by stamping his card "Present Without Authority."

What other complaints?

There was the waiter who told me that he resented "new entrant" waiters being able to command the same wage as he after only twelve months in the trade. There was the receptionist in a Hereford hotel who told me that, now the Act has laid down a basic minimum wage, her wages have been reduced and she is forced to work overtime to make the same money. She was, she said, "browned off"—and making it pretty obvious to management and guests alike.

For the hotelkeeper the Catering Wages Act has come as the last of a long line of handicaps. Tight money, lack of petrol, uncertain weather, increased rail fares—all these factors have made his business riskier and reduced his capacity for giving the best possible service.

Other industries can renovate their plant and equipment without having to pay purchase tax, but hotels are not so lucky, and hotel equipment is up in price by two or three hundred per cent.

It Isn't a Factory

No one will deny that before the war the hotel industry as an employer was fifty years behind the times. In many cases, wages were low and hours long. Waiters, porters and chambermaids had to supplement their wages with tips. Many employers discouraged their workers from joining a union.

A new deal of some kind had long been due to the workers, and the Catering Wages Act aimed to supply it.

But we must banish the notion that a hotel can be administered in air-tight compartments like a factory. Any hotel worth staying at must work twenty-four hours a day during certain seasons. To make the employer pay "spreadover" rates as well as overtime is to penalize not only the small hotel but, ultimately, its guests, too.

It might be worth substantially increasing the basic wage per hour and eliminating all overtime and "spreadover." At present, overtime is calculated on a daily, not a weekly, basis. This fails to take into account that a man may work twelve hours one day, only four the next.

For smaller hotels, night work regulations should be eased. Distinction should be made between large hotels and small hotels, between seasonal hotels and all-the-year-round hotels.

No one grudges paid holidays for staff, but younger recruits must realize, as their predecessors did, that the bulk of employers, far from being Simon Legrees, are willing to give them as much time off as they want—once the work is done.

Good workers behind the scenes should not be made to feel that their efforts are wasted since work-shys can command the same rates. Graduating the scales of pay for ability—some system of "merit money" over and above the basic wage—would be an incentive to keenness.

Drag on the Market

The plight of the hotel industry is grim.

Since the Catering Wages Act came into force, the industry has paid out wage increases totalling £22,500,000. Hotels are rapidly becoming a drag on the market: forty have recently been offered to the National Coal Board.

Those are the symptoms of a malady which is basically that the country's fourth major industry, employing 468,000 workers, can offer the public less service now than in any other period of its history.

Bad service means bad hotels. Bad hotels means fewer and fewer guests. Fewer guests means unemployment: it is as simple as that.

Somehow a square deal for hotel staffs must be reconciled with a square deal for guests. If this can be achieved our hotels will be doing a fine job for Britain.

For tourists from abroad they will become a national shop-window, displaying good working conditions and willing, efficient service. For us Britons, they will make a holiday or a business trip a pleasant experience instead of a harassing one, as it so often is now.

The remarkable cider

by CLEDWYN HUGHES

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

It was something of a village mystery—Reece, J.P., the miserly killjoy, being so free with his cider at Christmas time. And he a teetotaller, too

THE TOP FARM was a popular place only at harvest time and at the time of carol singing. Other less exciting times of the year old Reece was not greatly loved or admired in Pant parish; for he was something of a killjoy.

A man who was a J.P. on the Bench, and with, so it was said, over ten thousand pounds in the bank; money gained by a lifetime of rising at five in the morning and making his men work until eight at night. A fat bank balance made by hard dealing in the Smithfield and by selling snowdrops in the market and daffodils to Wilks the Florist. A hard man this Reece.

Hard in the heart and lean in the stomach, as all Pant parish knew. Those who came before him on the Bench knew that where other magistrates would lean to leniency, Reece Top Farm was the man who always whispered *Down the Line.*

And as for stomach — well, all knew that the food at Top Farm was the most ordinary anywhere. Reece ordered the groceries always himself from the village; his wife was a little skimp of a woman, aways of a flutter, and a shadow to her tall, red-faced husband in the way she said "Yes" and "No" and could look sad or happy as occasion demanded.

Reece ordered the grocery, and Jeremiah the Stores, he who had been christened Erasmus but who had taken more to woe than to learning, said that Reece Top Farm was the only man who asked especially for cheap, stale bread and for mice-soiled goods.

Such a man was Reece Top Farm. Something of a Puritan, and yet a man of the church and not of the chapel; though none knew how much he contributed to the funds, for when the velvet collecting bag came round his thin hand went in so deep that there was considerable doubt as to whether he was putting in or taking out.

Reece was a teetotaller so it was odd his farm should be so popular at Christmas and at harvest time.

In the summer time, when the heat made blue and far away the mountains, many casual labourers called at Top Farm offering to help stack the rustling, sweet-smelling hay. And at Christmas time the carol parties of Pant had to draw lots as to the order in which they should go to sing before the sun-blistered front door of Top Farm.

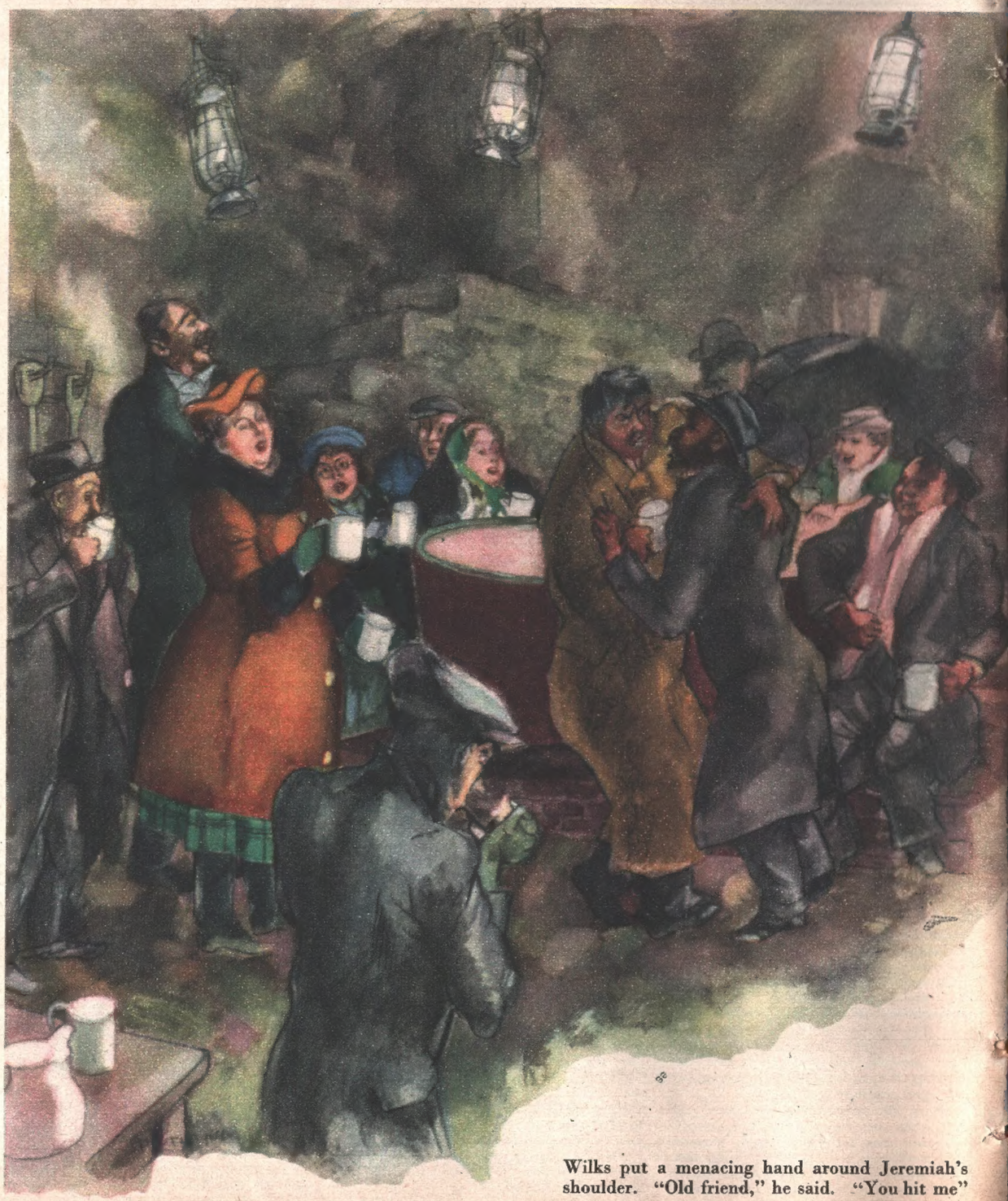
The attraction was the famous cider which Top Farm made. A truly remarkable drink of delightful flavour and most deadly potency. Other ciders were made in the valley, but none was like Top Farm cider.

CHRISTMAS EVE and harvest time were the only two occasions in the year when Reece Top Farm gave away this famous drink of his. At harvest time a keg was set up under the cool greenness of a tree with a mug chained to the trunk; free drink for all and a great aid to make the men forget the parsimonious wage that was waiting on a Saturday night.

At Christmas time it was hard to understand why Reece was so free with his cider. Maybe it was a compensation for all the rest of the year when he was so mean, and small in the mind as well as in the pocket.

Every party which called at Top Farm at Christmas time had as much as it could drink, and half the parish had aching heads on Christmas morning.

Jeremiah the Stores had the largest and the best trained carol party in the village. He was no singer himself, having a high wail of a voice as if his throat was a windy reed. But he had the art of bringing melody out of other



Wilks put a menacing hand around Jeremiah's shoulder. "Old friend," he said. "You hit me"

people and now this Christmas he had his carol party up for rehearsal in his storeroom.

He had made the men take off their coats and the women leave their handbags downstairs, for he trusted no man or woman where so much loose food was concerned. He had them sitting on boxes and he himself was standing on an old packing case which had once held oranges, and it seemed as if the very sun of California was perpetually rising under his feet.

This week before Christmas it was snowing; great silent flakes melting against the window and a howl under the eves to remind that outside a blizzard was blowing.

The rehearsal was over, and now Jeremiah was addressing his party.

"Now people, one thing only I have to put to you and important it is, too."

The fifteen looked at him, expectantly.

"It is this. I have been thinking about Reece J.P. Top Farm. He each Christmas gives us cider and wonderful cider it is."

Some of the party smiled and Wilks the Florist wiped his lips with the back of his hand as if it was still wet from last year.

But Jeremiah was talking and slapping his trousers with his baton.

"Cider is cider I say, but I say, too, that it would be far better if Reece gave us money instead. Cider is but for one night but hard cash is hard cash."

There was a quietness then and Jeremiah could see that what he had said was a shock to his party. Wilks took his hand down very slowly and stared at the hairy back, as if surprised that there was none of the wonderful cider left there.

STILL staring at his hand, Wilks the Florist stood to his feet; though not without some rumpus, for he didn't see that he was putting his foot into a whole two-pound bag of peas. It took the party a full ten minutes to pick them up and as it was, Maggie the Post almost broke her nose.

For she had on smooth-bottomed wellington boots and the peas acted on the principle of roller skates and she shot away at an alarming speed towards the top of the stairs. She managed to stop herself on a hanging side of bacon, the bacon becoming more dented than her nose.

The peas safely swept up, Jeremiah climbed to his perch and shook the air testily with his baton.

"Now, Mr. Wilks—" and Jeremiah must have been in a bad temper to give any man a title, "—now, Mr. Wilks, will you please say briefly what you were going to say before you created this hiatus?"

Wilks stood up again, this time very carefully. He spoke very quickly.

"I don't know what hiatus is but I do know that if we think more of money than anything else, we'll get like Reece himself."

Wilks sat down then. Jeremiah the Stores took a deep breath and the air whistled through the spaces in his false teeth. "Well, indeed, and are there any more words of wisdom from anyone else present?"

Maggie the Post Office got up, clutching at her nose sometimes. Her speech was brief. "The cider is very good. It is like champagne."

Jeremiah leaned forward, his box wobbling.

"And where, Maggie the Post Office, where did *you* taste champagne?"

She didn't answer and Jeremiah, like some solicitor in court, wagged his finger at her.

"Where, Maggie, where did you taste champagne?"

A new twinge must have come then to

Continued on next page

Policeman on the platform

by J. WARREN HARRIS

The railway policeman does far more than just shepherd queues, for a busy terminus is often terminus for crime

Suspect travellers? Jim Hughes makes note. He's met some tough types

JIM HUGHES, ex-Regular in the Coldstream Guards, met a pal by Marble Arch. "I've just joined this Railway Police outfit," his pal told him. "Why don't you have a go, too?" Jim Hughes was broke. He had a go.

That was twenty-one years ago, and in twenty-one years No. 181 P.C. Jim Hughes has never regretted his decision.

Unlike the average "copper," a railway policeman's warrant takes him anywhere in the British Isles—to ships, docks, quays. Inside the boundaries of railway property he has full police powers, although once an arrest is made and the charge-sheet drawn up, he invariably hands over to the local force. British Railways have no detention rooms.

Drawing up a charge-sheet inevitably involves a good deal of paper work, which railway policemen, being human, are anxious to avoid. Jim recalls one occasion on duty at Euston when a description was telephoned through of two girls who had escaped from a remand home and were known to be heading for Liverpool.

Sure enough, at the time the train was due out the girls arrived at the barrier.

"Liverpool?" said Jim, who had already tipped off the ticket collector. "You've missed the last train from here. If you hurry, you'll just catch the last one from St. Pancras."

The girls thanked him and hurried off. Five minutes later a squad car picked them up in the street. It was the irate car crew who got the job of making out the charge sheets.

Beards and Top Hats

Originally, railway police, in beards and top hats, combined the duties of policemen with those of signalling out the trains—by hand. They were mobilized as a regular force during the eighteen-fifties to preserve law and order among the tough Irish labour gangs laying the tracks.

A railway policeman's duties fall into one of two categories: passenger or goods. Goods patrols on freight stations are apt to be lonely and tedious after a time. On the other hand, passenger duties at crowded stations—traffic supervision and answering passengers' queries—can sorely try a policeman's patience.

The railway police do not always get the best of their friendly rivalry with the regular force. Once, when Jim and a colleague were on plain clothes duty during the night at Dalston Junction, they entered a railwayman's hut to brew themselves a cup of tea.

A passing "bobby," who saw the light from the roadway, got suspicious and raised the alarm. The hut was surrounded, and as soon as Jim and his fellow-constable left they were pounced on without warning, rolled in the dust and placed under arrest.

The most daring goods robbery that Jim encountered occurred at Crewe. The thieves had their eye on a mail bag containing bearer bonds. Members of the gang were on the platform at two o'clock in the morning, mingling with the sorters as the mail train steamed in.

The moment the bag hit the platform, they acted. A sack was whipped over the nearest sorter's head from behind. The thieves flung the bag on to a trolley, leapt aboard and trundled away down the platform to a side entrance. Thieves and mail bag promptly disappeared into a waiting car, but all of them were recovered later.

After the Last Train

Railway police pay starts at £310 in the first year of service, increasing to £370 in the twenty-third year. Since 1943 railway policemen have been entitled to a pension at sixty, and for this they pay into a superannuation fund.

One of Jim's principal duties on passenger work is to go the rounds of the station once the last train has gone for the night. Every big railway terminus has its nightly crop of deserters "on the run."

Recently Jim ran two ferocious-looking toughs to earth in the waiting-room and asked them for their identity cards. They couldn't produce them, but pleaded they had come to Euston to meet their grandmother. When they were handed over to the Metropolitan Police and searched, one of them was carrying a knife, the other a knuckleduster.

An official of the Travellers' Aid Society is always on hand to assist young girls who are left stranded, while the light ladies of Euston Road are the responsibility of the women police. Recently the Railway Police have been attempting to stem the increasing menace of what they call "the corner seat girl," prostitutes who ply their trade at night on the northern expresses.

Jim's most terrifying experience as a railway policeman occurred during the war. Backing on the line outside Euston was a stable full of horses. A stick of bombs blew a crater in the line and blasted some of the horses down the embankment into the crater.

Before anyone could go to the rescue, the Royal Scot came up the track and hurtled into the crater on top of them.

Jim was engaged on rescue work for forty-eight hours non-stop. He even assisted in taking the engine fireman's arm off at the shoulder with a pen-knife. Then he went home—to find his own house blitzed and in ruins.

Every railway policeman has to qualify in first aid. Jim once helped to deal with a miscarriage in a sleeping car.

During the flying-bomb period, he had charge of the evacuation of 250 expectant mothers. Even now, he thinks, there might have been panic, but for one thing. Every time a bomb was sighted overhead, every engine in the station had instructions to blow its whistle until the bomb had fallen. The mothers were evacuated without incident.

Unlike an ordinary policeman, Jim has no authority to advance money to stranded travellers, although he has sometimes done it "on the side." Once he lent an old woman five shillings—to be paid back a few days later with a five-pound note. But a well-dressed woman who pleaded that she had bought a ticket to Plymouth and was now penniless was less scrupulous. Jim gave her two shillings. He caught up with her at the fruit stall a little later—buying two shillingsworth of hot-house grapes.

Out Came a Chemise

Once Jim had the job of pacifying an infuriated naval officer who discovered, too late, that his suitcase, containing two bottles of whisky, had been exchanged for another while he was standing at the booking office. Ensconced in his carriage before the train started, he had groped in the case for a "snifter"—and unearthed a pair of camiknickers and a chemise.

Eventually, Jim hopes, the Railway Police allowances—at present there are virtually none—will be brought into line with the regular force, and, although he doesn't think it is likely to happen in his time, he feels sure it will come one day.

After all, he points out, pensions were only granted in 1943, and this year, for the first time, the force has had permission from the King to incorporate the Royal crown in its badge.

Says Jim philosophically, recalling the origins of the Railway Police: "It's all part of the progress from being a fully-bearded signalman to being a fairly competent civil servant."

THE REMARKABLE CIDER

Continued from previous page

her nose for she stood up defiantly and shook her fist at him.

"In Blackpool, there. And I shall leave this carol party. I am fond of cider. I shall go and sing on my own. There."

She stamped both her feet and went away in a little cloud of dust towards the stairs.

She had gone quite halfway down when Jeremiah sent Wilks to fetch her back. For besides the danger of losing his best soprano there was the danger that the party might disintegrate, for they seemingly loved this cider of Top Farm, and this Christmas it would have to be the same reward as ever.

The snow remained and a great frost came in the last days before Christmas. The roads were hard and had an echo, and on one of the farms a tractor crossed a pond without knowing.

Christmas Eve came with a cold round moon and Jeremiah and his party stood stamping their feet at the bottom of the long straight drive to Top Farm.

Jeremiah stood on the hard snow of the hedge bank to give a few last words.

"Now, people, sing like diamonds. And you, Maggie the Post, do not sparkle too much, subdue your voice just a little. Now let us go and give Christmas to Reece J.P. Top Farm."

They trudged up the drive, the snow hard and rutted. They arrived at the house without accident. As at every Christmas Eve there was yellow light in one of the lower windows, with sometimes a shadow passing before it; either the tall Reece himself or his wife, small and half a hunchback.

People wondered what they both did all the winter evenings, for they had no children to give them worry or pleasure, no exciting plans to be made for the visit of Father Christmas and no tree to raise, no decorations to hang.

Jeremiah gave a last whisper:

"Now, my people, sing like the angels and remember the treat that is waiting for you. Though I would rather we sang not for cider."

Maggie the Post Office began an argument then.

"Let us sing for the joy of Christmas and not for cider or money either."

"Maggie, I know what you will sing for. But come now, tilt your faces back for 'Good King Wenceslas.'"

As if competing at an Eisteddfod they sang, all eyes on their conductor and clasping their hands before them. Maggie the Post Office was reaching the notes dead on tune and even Wilks the Florist had less of the funeral in his voice than usual.

At the end of the carol they sang a "Wish you a Merry Christmas" and repeated it three times and afterwards were very quiet, waiting for the clink of glasses in the hallway or the creak of the stopcock being turned, for the cider barrel was always laid on the third step of the stairs.

A narrow strip of light came under the door, the chain was slid out, the bolts moved back and the door of Top Farm creaked back.

The long narrow hall was bright with light, the stairs waxed and polished and uncarpeted.

All the carol party looked straight to the stairs, but there was no barrel there, ready and waiting.

There was a little uneasiness among the singers and just as Jeremiah was about to look round the door, Reece himself stepped out.

He was dressed in Sunday black, with his big watchchain golden and heavy across his thin stomach. He was smiling, a rare thing for Reece J.P. to be doing.

He stood on the threshold and spoke

"No, never push them away, Miss Foster. Just *pull* the handles *towards* you"

to them, his hand uplifted like a saint of old.

"A Happy Christmas to you, carol singers; we have enjoyed your singing and we have our usual reward for you."

Jeremiah's party looked again to the stairs, as if expecting the barrel to have appeared there by some conjuring trick. Reece must have seen the movement of the eyes for he quickly spoke again.

"Ah, my wife is a little late this year. We have been slow in the cider making and we have not yet had time to barrel the liquor. It takes a long time to scour and rinse the barrels, and I and my wife are not as young as we used to be."

There were murmurs of sympathy from the singers. Reece went on: "But we know that you will not mind taking it straight from the vat."

They said that they didn't mind in the least. And then Reece J.P. asked them in and led the way to the cool, slate-floored cellar. Maggie the Post Office came down last, not feeling too safe in her slippery wellington boots.

Reece's wife was down there already, sitting like a little girl on the edge of the great round vat. On a tray she had laid out a couple of dozen white mugs. Over her head there were dangling three storm lanterns, giving a yellow light to the cellar. As Wilks the Florist said afterwards, she looked like some witch at her brew.

Reece addressed the party again.

"Take a mug off the tray and dip into the cider. You all know how famous is the Top Farm cider. Well, drink your fill. We will leave you to it with a Merry Christmas."

He and his wife went up from the cellar. At the top Reece called back to the singers. "And please leave quietly by the back way. The door is open."

They called Merry Christmas to him and then with a bit of a rush they went for the mugs. Maggie the Post Office got two and dipped them in together. The others were more orderly and soon all were drinking and saying how delightful this cider was. Much better than last year, Wilks the Florist said, and just like nectar.

But it was Jeremiah who was the most enthusiastic. All the time he kept saying how foolish he had been to suggest neglecting this wonderful treat. As he spoke he gave a playful poke with the mug at Wilks.

It must have been that at that very moment Wilks had reached his capacity, or maybe the fermented apple juice had then reached his bloodstream, for on the moment a rage seemed to come to him. He laid a hand very gently but very menacingly on Jeremiah's shoulder.

"Old friend," he said, "my dear old friend, you hit me on the stomach, didn't you?"

Jeremiah the Stores never frequents public houses or he would perhaps have seen the danger signal, sensed the overfondness of this question. He in all innocence laughed and tapped Wilks again.

"There Wilks, there, and I have tapped you again. It is Christmas and is not this cider wonderful?"

DOUBTLESS Jeremiah would have said much more had not Wilks suddenly seized hold of him with a great "yah."

Wilks held Jeremiah fast against the side of the vat. The florist was muttering: "You nasty little man, you nasty little shopkeeper. You tried to stop me from having this cider, didn't you?"

Jeremiah could only give a gurgle of a reply, but even that seemed to enrage Wilks more, for his voice became a hoarse whisper: "You dared to tap my stomach in contempt. Well, I shall teach you a lesson."

And Wilks lifted Jeremiah into the air as the soberer ones of the carol party closed in to try to save their conductor. But Wilks was standing on a stool and had dropped Jeremiah into the cider with a great splash and much bubbling. Jeremiah gave a long sad moan and sat down in the vat, the cider up to his neck.

The shock seemed to daze him, for he sat there meekly and closed his eyes.

Wilks was still perched on his stool and bent forward over the vat to jeer at Jeremiah.

"You have always found fault with me, Jeremiah, and Christmas is as good a time as any to catch up with you."

Wilks must have been over-anxious to taunt poor Jeremiah, for he leaned too far. A man high up on a stool at any time is a dangerous thing and Wilks was full of this cider as well. None tried to save him, indeed Wilks firmly says that someone pushed him. Anyway, he was soon in the vat and the two of them sat side by side as if old friends with never a quarrel between them.

The rest of the party started to laugh—all, that is, except Maggie the Post Office, who had meanwhile disappeared up the steps, taking her two mugs with her.

It was Wilks who put a stop to that. Without any intention he was feeling about in the cider behind him and suddenly his hand came up holding a very giant of a rat by the tail, and with the cider trickling off the dead body.

Jeremiah scrambled out of the vat. But Wilks stayed in and stroked his rat, calling it poor pussy. Eventually they got him out and he dropped the rat back into the cider with a plop and a bubble.

Some were sick. They all went back to the village very quietly, with not the heart to sing again this Christmas Eve. On the way they caught up with Maggie the Post Office sitting on a milestone from which she had brushed off the snow. She had a mug in each hand and was drinking.

They tried to tell her what they had seen, but she refused to believe them; kept shaking her head and saying that they were all quite drunk. Saying, too, what lovely cider it was.

"How nourishing," she kept saying, "how very good as a tonic."

Jeremiah's party got back to the village in time to warn the other carol singers. Though they, too, were unbelieving and rather for thinking there was some spite in this tale somewhere.

But it was Thomas the Smithy who said what had been. They were all gathered by the fire which had been lit at the village pump to stop it from freezing. There Thomas the Smithy said that only last week he had repaired a rat-trap cage for Reece Top Farm.

Those who were not sick joined Thomas the Smithy's party to go to other houses. Wilks and Jeremiah were wet with cider, the liquid squelching in their shoes, though some of Thomas's party would not believe that it was so much cider wasted until they had taken a good smell of it.

WILKS and Jeremiah were taken home and to bed, and for months afterwards their clothes and bodies smelt like an orchard at apple picking time. Dogs attacked them vigorously and even the following summer a swarm of bees settled on the body of Wilks when he was changing his undervest one day.

Reece Top Farm will now have no visitors at harvest time or on a Christmas Eve; no cheap labour, no sweet singing will he entice with his famous cider.

All Pant knows that sometimes a little fresh meat is added to home-made cider to give it a bite and a taste and a tang, a substance for the liquor to feed on. But none would surely grudge the price of a little butcher's meat, that which Reece must have been too mean to buy all the years.

Reece J.P. is left in his loneliness with his wife. Doubtless he is often angry with her, for the tale got back to him and he knows why he is neglected; doubtless he wishes that she had been quick to barrel the cider and then none would have known the secret.

In harvest time Reece has to import labour from the next parish and pay transport and the highest wage.

But no transport or wage will bring carol singers to his front door on a Christmas Eve. He who has ten thousand pounds, yet no person in Pant will come through the snow to sing to him. And that, perhaps, is the saddest hour of his meanness.

THE HUMAN MACHINE • by ROFFE THOMPSON

THE other day I spent three hours with a friend while he discussed with experts certain television ideas of his.

All this time he was patiently listening to cameramen, electricians, art directors and sound engineers.

"What I want to do," he kept saying, "is to understand *your* difficulties. Show me just how you work, just what you can and what you can't do.

"Then," he added, "I'll go away and work out my ideas to fit in with your limitations."

I couldn't help thinking how much easier and pleasanter life would be if only we all dealt with each other on a similar basis.

People—or communities—cannot work together without a common basis of sympathetic understanding.

What each of us should concentrate on is how we can fit in our wishes and needs with the other fellow's instead of how we can fight him.

WHY THE VOLUNTEERS HANG BACK

by HUBERT COLE

We're still waiting for thousands of "Terriers." And we'll go on waiting, so long as vital human problems are ignored

Ex-R.A. Captain F. Kirby, sworn in as a ranker by adjutant, Captain G. Holbert, got special permission to join. At forty-one he was too old

No lonely night for Sgt. L. Morgan's German-born wife Elfriede: drill night chat with R.S.M. Rogers, ex-Japanese p.o.w., and L/Bdr. H. Cooper

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY is a headache. It is not just a headache for somebody else: for Shinwell or Slim or the War Office. It is a headache for the nation.

The importance of a strong Territorial Army is not to be questioned. We cannot put our cake into uniform and eat it in the factories: we cannot maintain a large Regular Army and still have enough men for production. So the peacetime, part-time Terriers must fill the gap.

The bulk of them will ultimately be national service men. Each year close on 100,000 youngsters will leave the Regular Army after their eighteen months' training and take a four-and-a-half year postgraduate course in the Territorial Army.

The provision of these national service men has been assured—by Act of Parliament. But there is no Act of Parliament to provide the experienced ex-soldiers to instruct them.

There are hundreds of thousands of these men in civvy street, men who learned their craft in five or six years of war. These are the men who are asked to volunteer for the Territorial Army now. And they are *not* volunteering.

The target is set at 150,000. The total enlisted by the end of October, after nearly two years of recruiting and the launching of a high-pressure publicity campaign, was only 61,000.

"Adam and Eve" Unit

Why don't the men come in? Are they browned off with the military life? Do they have a poor opinion of the Territorial Army itself? Are their wives unwilling to let them out for one evening a week? Is there some inhibiting factor which nobody has yet lighted upon?

The answers are best to be found at a Territorial unit itself. At the 499th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, for instance, which has its headquarters at Iverna Gardens, Kensington. (The other address, appropriately for a mixed unit, is Adam and Eve Mews.)

The hallway opens into a canteen, bright, well-furnished. Beyond is the drill hall, an instructor practising a squad in foot-drill in the body of the hall, on the platform recruits being lectured on the organization of A.A. Command, at a table A.T.S. officers interviewing prospective entrants. One battery is up on the gun-site at Wormwood Scrubs. The men and women parade side by side.

After the recent recruiting drive began, recruits came into the 499th at a rate of more than ten a week. Early this month the unit had a strength of 200; well on the way to its immediate target of 250. But of the 200, only 63 were men. In Adam and Eve Mews, Eve outnumbers Adam in far greater proportions than elsewhere.

I talked to some of the women in the canteen. They had enlisted for many reasons: some had military connections in the family; one had lost a brother in the war and felt she would like to do something herself. The common denominator was keenness to serve.

Visiting the regiment, one of six in the 64th A.A. Brigade which he commands, is Brigadier B. Chichester Cooke. The brigadier was a Territorial long before the war and commanded an ack-ack brigade which shot down buzz-bombs during it. The 499th is next to the top in recruiting figures for his brigade; some of the others are a long way behind.

Did the men he is after have enough between '39 and '45? The brigadier thinks not.

"Somebody said the other day that all the men now in the Army want to get out; and all those who have come out want to get back in again. I think there's quite a lot in that. But their wives don't want them to go back.

"I have visited dozens of firms lately, trying to interest men in joining. Nearly all of them have said that, after having been away from home for six years, they cannot persuade their wives to let them take nights off now."

Club Room for Wives

The brigadier aims to get round this difficulty by making the regimental barracks a social centre as well.

Some members of this mixed unit, like Sgt. Johnson, who came from the Inniskilling Fusiliers via the Palestine Police, have solved the problem easily. Sgt. Johnson's wife attends the same parades—as a lance-bombardier.

Others, like Sgt. L. Morgan, who is married to a German girl, bring their wives for a drink in the canteen and a gossip with other husbands and wives. "But," the sergeant adds, "we get more turn up on a parade night than on a social evening." The lonely wives are undoubtedly part of the problem: but not the greater part.

Have stories of prewar Territorial shortcomings put off potential recruits? Do they expect to find poor and obsolete equipment, officers who have joined for flippant social reasons, third-rate instructors who have been found a job in the T.A. because the Regular Army has no use for them?

If so, the brigadier says, they are mistaken. Much of the equipment, far from being obsolete, is more modern than that used by the Regular Army: a surprising but wise arrangement, since the Territorial Army will ultimately be the largest user of such equipment.

Must Pass Board

The officers have either held commissions in the artillery during the war, or have served at least twelve months in the ranks of the postwar Territorial Army. In either case, they have to pass a selection board composed of members of the local Territorial Association and a Regular Army representative of the arm into which they are going.

In the difficult task of laying down a form of discipline for his civilian soldiers, the brigadier is quite clear about what he is aiming at: "On parade, a high standard of discipline. Off parade, no discipline beyond that of ordinary good manners. We have a separate officers' mess and sergeants' mess so as not to

Continued on page 17

PAINLESS CHILDB

Why not let all mothers share this boon?

by HA

Type of analgesia aid said to have been used by Princess Elizabeth: the mother herself controls inhaler and is able to co-operate during labour

AT LAST THERE IS SOME real evidence of what may be called the consumer's point of view on maternity services in this country.

Some time ago a nation-wide survey was arranged by the Population Investigation Committee and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists with the aim of finding out about deficiences in our maternity services.

The help of health visitors was enlisted for the survey. They put a long series of questions to almost all the mothers who gave birth to babies between March 3 and March 9, 1946. Nearly all the local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland co-operated in the investigation.

Altogether 13,687 mothers answered the many questions which the health visitors put to them. It has taken nearly two years to analyse the mass of questionnaires, but it has been worth waiting for the results; they are most interesting.

First the question of pain relief in childbirth.

That pain in childbirth can be relieved—not all of the pain all of the time, but most of the pain and for most of the time—is no new idea.

Anaesthetics were discovered just over 100 years ago, and recently a score of new methods of anaesthesia have been in use. It is possible, using elaborate methods of anaesthesia, for some women to bear children without any pain or without any recollection of pain. This is the ideal and applies only in a few cases.

For the big majority of mothers the pains, which go on often for twelve to twenty-four hours, can be greatly relieved and the worst pains during the actual birth of the baby can be entirely banished.

Yet the childbirth survey discloses that the principal complaint of over 13,000 mothers was that they received no anaesthetics at all or only some unsatisfactory form of pain relief.

First Three Months

Another important conclusion from the survey is that less than half the mothers in this country attend antenatal clinics during the first three months of pregnancy, when there is the best chance of giving advice and making arrangements that would help to prevent premature births and the deaths of babies in the first few weeks of life.

Some of the reasons for this are clear enough. Many clinics are in unsuitable and overcrowded premises. Many of them have made no attempt to arrange an appointments system. It is often difficult for a young mother who already has one or two children and whose husband is out at work to get someone to look after them while she goes to the clinic.

The standard of antenatal care in many clinics is the best in the world. There are others, however, where the standards are not nearly so good as they should be.

There was one clinic visited, says the report, where the doctor saw twenty-nine women in eighty minutes. This is clearly almost a complete waste of time so far as the mothers—and for that matter the doctor—are concerned.

Other complaints were that the waiting-rooms in clinics were too small and were often equipped with only wooden benches.

One mother said that in the last few months of pregnancy it was very trying to have to sit on a hard wooden bench for two and a half hours waiting for a doctor.

Complaints were also made about confinements at home, often in appalling conditions.

There are few doctors who, on asking in a tenement whether everything is ready for the expected labour, have not been assured that everything *is* ready—and have then been given a rusty bucket and a few newspapers.

Deliveries still take place on mattresses on an uncarpeted stone floor. Deliveries still take place with the husband and children in the same room, because it is after midnight, it is raining, and there is literally nowhere else for them to go.

Left on Their Own

Here the answer lies in more and better houses, and no short-term solution offers any help.

Most of these women should be delivered in hospital. But the hospitals have not enough beds and are often under-staffed. This means very frequently that women are left alone for long periods during labour—a frightening experience to which no woman should ever be subjected.

Here the answer is more midwives, more staff and perhaps more maternity beds in hospitals all over the country.

These are long-term answers to long-term problems. But the one problem that can be dealt with quickly is the one about which most complaints were made by mothers whose answers make up the present survey.

Of all the mothers who were confined at home in the metropolitan boroughs, only five per cent were given some form of analgesia during labour.

Analgesia is not quite the same as anaesthesia. Anaesthesia means that the mother is given an anaesthetic and is completely unconscious. Analgesia means that she is half-conscious but can still help in the delivery of her own child, by changing her position, by resting between pains and by helping to push the baby out when she is told to do so.

This half-doped state of analgesia, after which there is no recollection of the pains of labour, can be brought about by a number of different drugs, by the use of gas-and-air machines, or by the use of a trilene self-controlled inhaler, which is said to have been used at the beginning of her confinement by Princess Elizabeth.

The nation-wide survey shows that

IRTH

RVEY GRAHAM, M.D.

After analgesia birth, a mother has no recollection of labour pains. Why limit benefits to lucky minority?

many women who were delivered in hospital or maternity homes received some kind of anaesthesia or analgesia, but there are still far too many delivered in hospitals without any significant relief of pain.

There is, too, an extraordinary class difference in the arrangements for relieving the pain of childbirth. Of the mothers who are attended by doctors, forty-eight per cent are given some relief during the worst pains of labour. Of the women who are attended by midwives, only eight per cent receive similar relief.

If your husband is a salaried or professional worker you are twice as likely to remember nothing about the birth of your baby as those mothers whose husbands are, say, agricultural workers.

Analgesia of some sort is more often given for first babies than for subsequent confinements. But even so, the report states that only thirty-one per cent of manual workers' wives were given analgesia at a first confinement as compared with sixty-three per cent—more than twice as many—of the wives of salaried and professional workers.

It is not surprising that those mothers who were investigated during this national survey mentioned the lack of analgesia as their biggest complaint.

The pains of labour have been known since the world began. The fact that the birth of a child will be painful is one of the few things that can be predicted with certainty without reference to a Gallup poll.

It has been argued that labour pains are an essential part of mother love, and that a mother who feels no pain because she is anaesthetized will lack some special virtue in the care of her children. A virtue painfully bought by her less fortunate sisters. This is nonsense.

I do not believe that the pains of labour serve any useful purpose.

Midwives Can Cope

The date of the labour is usually known. And with very little trouble the pain can be greatly diminished. The pains of labour are preventable, and if preventable, why not prevented?

Why are the pains of childbirth only prevented for a proportion of mothers, and for better-off mothers rather than working-class mothers?

There are certain kinds of anaesthesia and analgesia which can only be given by a doctor. There are not enough doctors to attend all the labours that take place. Yet almost every labour in this country is attended by a midwife, and there are now several effective forms of analgesia which can be given by the midwife alone.

All midwives are now allowed to give gas-and-oxygen analgesia with what is called the Minnitt apparatus. This is a miniature version of the kind of machine the dentists use. There are cylinders of nitrous oxide, which is better known as laughing gas, and cylinders of oxygen. Both gases flow through a tube to a rubber face-piece which fits over the mouth and nose.

The mother holds this in position herself, and the way the machine works can be explained to her by any good midwife in less than five minutes.

When the mother holds the mask firmly to her face she breathes gas and oxygen and is rendered partly unconscious, so that the pains are barely felt at all.

Once the mother is completely unconscious her grip on the handle of the mask loosens and the gas ceases to flow. She will then come round slowly during the interval between the pains. The moment another pain can be felt coming on it wakes her sufficiently to make her bring the machine into operation again and take another whiff of gas.

This method is a very satisfactory one for the straightforward deliveries which make up the big majority of cases. There are now over 14,000 midwives in the country—out of the 17,000 practising—who are qualified to give their patients this relief, using either the Minnitt apparatus or similar machines.

Why, then, are so many women denied a simple and safe method for the relief of pain which can be given by midwives in the absence of doctors?

The reasons are simple and reflect very little credit on many of our local authorities. A gas-and-air machine weighs thirty pounds. It is too heavy to be carried on a bicycle, and a midwife would have to be very burly and very single-minded to carry the heavy cases, together with all her other equipment, on foot to patients who may well live one or more miles away.

The Minnitt apparatus can be carried easily in the smallest kind of car. The more enlightened local authorities either arrange for their midwives to have cars or give them an allowance for running their own cars.

But there are still far too many authorities which will neither provide a car for a midwife nor provide her with a mileage or maintenance allowance if she uses her own.

Some authorities will allow their ambulances to be used. There are others which refuse even the use of the ambulance on the incredible grounds that it might encourage the midwives to ask to be taken to the confinement in the ambulance themselves. This in the year 1948!

Providing analgesia for most of the mothers in this country will involve local authorities in a little extra trouble and a little extra expense. Surely there are few items of local authority expenditure which could better be justified.

Immediately and without waiting for any new regulations or new Acts of Parliament every local authority should arrange transport for Minnitt or other kinds of gas-and-air apparatus used by their midwives. Ambulances can take on this job where there are no cars.

One small car could be used by a team of midwives, and those midwives who have their own cars should be enabled by adequate mileage and maintenance allowances to use them freely for transporting the only apparatus which is generally available at present for relieving the worst pains of labour.

If Not, Why Not?

So far as hospitals are concerned the problem is even simpler; yet the survey shows that only fifty-two per cent of women delivered in hospital were given relief from pain. There are a number of enlightened hospitals which now have a set rule. Midwives who are responsible for normal deliveries which do not require the attendance of a doctor or specialist have to report in writing their reasons for *not* providing analgesia in any case in which they do not do so.

In every maternity hospital analgesia for every case should be a general rule, and good reasons should be given for departing from this rule. Midwives must be encouraged to give analgesia in every suitable case. Few hospitals lack the apparatus, but too many of them discourage their staff from using it.

There are certain confinements in which for some reason analgesia or anaesthesia might greatly increase the risk to the mother or the child and cannot, therefore, be advised. These cases are very few, however.

The Population Investigation Committee and the Royal College have done good service by drawing attention to this widespread failure to provide relief from the pains of labour. Their report is one that should be acted on, and acted on promptly, by all hospitals and by all local authorities responsible for maternity services.

In this day and age the kind of analgesia which is available for the wives of professional and salaried workers should be just as easily available to all mothers without exception.

It may be that the arrangements under the National Health Service will provide a new opportunity which local authorities should seize to raise their maternity services and antenatal clinics to the standard of the best.

Antenatal services should be publicised widely and everything should be done to make it possible for mothers to come under antenatal supervision in the first three months rather than the last three months of pregnancy.

There are a number of general problems and difficulties here, but they are none of them insoluble.

Meanwhile the cause of complaint of so many mothers in this country—that the pains of labour were not relieved—should be tackled energetically and at once.

FREE SPEECH

Miss Sheila Longbottom: horror films, as child, did no harm

Miss Paula Parker: twice Venus of Britain, she worked hard, too

Mrs. Alice Crowe: at seventy-two she is "happy little soul"

As a londoner in Australia, I should like to air a grievance about the lack of interest shown by British recipients of food parcels.

Australia has sent over a million and a quarter food parcels a year to Britain, yet very few letters of thanks are received, and scarcely ever what I would call a newsy letter. People out here do not want paeans of praise for what they do, but they do ask a cheery letter in return.

No doubt this is pure thoughtlessness on the part of the recipients. Nevertheless, as constant appeals are still being made throughout the Dominion for food parcels, such negligence is doing the cause a good deal of harm.—H. Jackson, J.P., 2 St. Anne's Square, South Strathfield, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Public School Education

The film, *The Guinea Pig*, showed the son of a small shopkeeper at a public school. I was myself sent to a small public school, and, being below the social standing of the other boys, I experienced most of his trouble.

I came up against snobbery when one of the boys found out that I lived in a small semi-detached house instead of the larger houses in which most of the others lived. Adolescence, always a difficult period, became for me a hellish time. I dreaded parents' visiting days, though I realized the sacrifice it had meant for mine to send me to this school.

All this might have been worth it if it had given me any real advantage, but my education was no better than that of boys at the local grammar school.

Public school boys succeed because they are the children of the professional classes. It is influence and privilege that make for such success and not a superior form of education.—E. W. B., Carlisle. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Should Children Decide?

Many parents keep a check on their children's reading to see that books are "suitable," and cinemas today label some films "for adults only."

At one cinema, however, the manager took little notice of the grading, and from the age of eight I saw whichever films I wanted. I was also allowed to read whatever interested me. Despite the fact that the films I then liked best were horrific, I distinctly remember crying bitterly on seeing a dog which had been run over, lying in the gutter, while indifferent adults passed by.

I am now sixteen, and I cannot see that my freedom of choice in reading and films has done me any harm, compared with other girls. But I *do* know now how my tastes lie. Children will never learn to discriminate unless they are allowed freedom of choice in these matters from an early age.—Miss Sheila Longbottom, 32 Rowland Street, Skipton, Yorks.

Venus Who Worked

Dennis holman's article, "Mr. Superman Keeps a Chart" (John Bull, November 27), was of great interest to me, as the girl feeling Ivor Hyde's bicep is my daughter, Paula Parker, who has twice won the title of Venus of Britain.

However, I was surprised at the statement that a "Miss Britain" never did anything more energetic to gain *her* title than "peeling a potato." This was certainly not the case with Paula.

She worked very hard for physical perfection from the age of fifteen. At twenty-one she had started her own "Venus Academy" in Grimsby, trained over 100 pupils, including six national winners and many finalists. At the same time she managed one of her father's businesses during the day and also worked as an artist's and photographer's model.—Mrs. M. Parker, 124 Louth Road, Scarthoe, Grimsby.

Tough, Too

I cannot say I was very pleased with Dennis Holman's article about me. The gist of it seemed to be that male physical culturists are a self-centred bunch whose only object in life is to look beautiful.

Certainly our aim is physical perfection, but we're not dandies. We can *use* our muscles, too.—Ivor J. Hyde, 12 Kingswood Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.

Story Worth Telling

A few months ago I advertised for a woman to assist with the housework, and though doubtful of her ability to help me, engaged an old lady of seventy-two.

I have never regretted it. Mrs. Alice Crowe is not a typical "char," and until the war her life was very happy. Then a land mine fell on her house. Her husband died of his injuries and she was in hospital for several months. For the loss of her husband, her life savings, and her eight-roomed, well-furnished house, including a piano, radiogram and other luxuries, she received £30!

Now she keeps house for an old man of over eighty, who pays her no wages but allows her a room. She does her work for me well, and I wouldn't change her for a younger woman. She is a happy little soul and never grumbles—just one of the thousands of brave little people whose story is worth the telling.—Mrs. E. F. L., Norwich. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Hearing Aids

My doctor recently applied for me to the local eye and ear hospital for one of the new hearing aids supplied under the National Health scheme.

Now, I have received a letter from the almoner asking for my full name and age, which is reasonable, and also for my husband's occupation and my religion, which is not. Just what bearing my husband's occupation and my religion has on the extent of my deafness it is hard to understand.—Mrs. R. W., Hants. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Paid for Their Keep

New zealand is one country which has actually made profit out of prisoners of war. A cement-mixing plant was taken into a camp for Japanese p.o.w.s, who were taught to make cement baths, washtubs and basins.

They made enough to meet demands for the country's first year of postwar housing. In other camps they were taught carpentry, and most of the Government offices of Auckland are today equipped with desks and chairs made by the p.o.w.s.—E. Scott, 16 Maroela Road, Primrose, Germiston, Transvaal, South Africa.

Stumped

It's high time Post Office engineers found some means of indicating when stamp machines are empty. There must surely be some simple gadget which could be attached to lock the machine; or, alternatively, one that would return the coin if a stamp cannot be supplied.—Mrs. E. Williams, 193 Rochester Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex.

One-man Band

Clive upton's fine cover painting of Arthur Griffis's one-man band (John Bull, November 27) calls to mind the memorable hunger march from the Rhondda Valley to London, which was led by this virtuoso.

His music and gaiety kept alive the determination and courage that won for us many of today's privileges. The picture honoured both Griffis and Wales.—F. Weatherall, 3 Jenkins Street, Hopkinstown, Pontypridd, Glam.

Let Nothing Ye Dismay

Last year, h.m. inspector of taxes sent in his claim on Christmas Eve. The same thing happened in 1946.

Is it too much to hope that this year I may get a card from him expressing more seasonable sentiments? The day of reckoning may surely be deferred long enough to avert the risk of spoiling a Scotsman's New Year!—W. R. T., Selkirk. (Full name and address enclosed.)

Warning to Young Men

Travelling by train recently, I shared the compartment with three young women. One was reading parts of a love letter aloud, to the accompaniment of shrieks of laughter from the others, and prompted by cries of "Go on, what does the big sissy say next?"

I could not fail to hear what seemed to be a very sincere love letter, and it annoyed me to think that these young hussies should be mocking at a private letter, written probably by some decent lad who little dreamed his words would be the subject of derision in a railway carriage.—A. B. McFarlane, 12 St. Giles Street, Edinburgh, 1.

Because of space shortage only a limited selection of the many readers' letters submitted can be printed. If your views are squeezed out, it does not mean that they have been overlooked by the Editor. For every letter used, John Bull pay one guinea. Letters should be marked "Free Speech" and carry the full name and address of sender for publication.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

WHY THE VOLUNTEERS HANG BACK

Continued from page 13

embarrass the other ranks; but I feel that the ideal solution is to have one common club for the whole regiment, as the H.A.C. have."

The 499th have partially reversed the brigadier's requirements. In the canteen I found an excess of politeness and a disturbing tendency to stand to attention. In the drill hall I was astonished to see an instructor giving orders with his hands behind his back.

This was surely carrying informality to excess. It is an attitude which cannot win respect from the troops and reveals lack of respect *for* the troops. It is the sort of thing that gives a man the uncomfortable feeling that he is only playing at soldiers.

It was the commander of the regiment, Lieut.-Colonel Borrett, however, who brought up the main snag. He talked about the wives who did not want to be left alone, and the employers who were not always keen to have a large proportion of their staff away from work to attend the annual camp. And then he said:

"You know, there's a feeling of resentment among these men we're after—the men who served in the war—at coming home to find other men well dug in. They feel that they have set aside ambition too long; that their duty now is to make up for lost time.

Fear of Being "Caught"

"They fear that, if they are in the Territorials and are called up at the beginning of another war, they will again lose money and the chance of advancement. Though quite prepared to serve again they mean to hang on to their civilian jobs—and salaries—as long as they can."

I think the colonel is on to something very solid there. Joining the Territorials, particularly for the older men who would not expect to be called up for some time in any future war, means the sacrifice not merely of an evening or two a week now, but also of financial status if war comes.

It is not a matter of patriotism, but of responsibility to wife and family. It is a question of how much sacrifice any one man should make; whether he should be expected to make it twice in one lifetime; and what the other fellow is doing.

These Don't Compensate

The bounty, the allowance for week-end training: these are insignificant. They do not repay the average man for his loss of time and leisure. They certainly do not repay him for the loss of his civilian job and the substitution of Army rates of pay if the balloon goes up.

That, I am convinced, is the question at the back of the mind of the Invisible Man for whom the T.A. is looking. Solve it and the missing 89,000 will appear at the drill hall.

The minor problems of equipment and discipline will sort themselves out with time and practice. The wives, if the pressing need is explained, will surrender their husbands for one evening a week just as they surrendered them for years on end during the war.

The key, then, is the refusal, particularly by the older and more experienced men, to sacrifice the future of their families and dependants by becoming liable for call-up at a moment's notice with no compensation for loss of employment and civilian income.

I believe the greatest fillip the recruiting campaign could receive would come from a War Office announcement that this problem is being tackled.

Mortensen (left): Verve and initiative like his can end dull, defensive soccer

Goal-snatcher who shows a new way

by JULIAN HOLLAND

FOR THE FIRST TIME for many years, one of the leading goal scorers in English football is a man not playing in the centre-forward position. In three seasons of football since the war, Blackpool's Stanley Mortensen has scored from inside-right as surely and as regularly as most of the recognized marksmen.

From the time of the alteration of the offside rule in 1925, goal scoring has been largely the lot of the centre-forward, whose job has been to wait up-field to finish off the approach work of his inside-forwards.

The Mortensen goals have been goals of a new pattern. Like most goals they have resulted from a defensive error—not so much from the mistake of an individual defender, as from Mortensen's ability to exploit that relaxation in which defenders tend to indulge after the breaking up of an attack.

There are a few seconds' breathing space, the tension of the game lessens and defenders move back into position, regrouping and locating their opposite numbers. In those few relaxed seconds the Mortensen goal happens. He has collected the ball, is up-field, through the defence and shooting the ball past a surprised goalkeeper before anyone has had time to regain his concentration.

Ball That Others Leave

They are above all opportunist goals. The ball that others are content to let go is Mortensen's ball. The ball that by a tired, mutual consent is allowed to run loose into touch or over the goal-line is the ball that Mortensen may seize upon and bring back into dangerous play. In last season's Cup Final he chased a loose ball down to the corner flag, turned it back into play and screwed in a seemingly impossible curling shot that Crompton, the Manchester United goalkeeper, was only just able to tip over the bar.

All is over before the other players—even those of his own side—have had time to realize something is happening.

It was not until 1945 that Mortensen got his first chance in the England team.

The possibilities of his dynamic play were then becoming appreciated. The England side needed above all things a new goal scorer. During the years that Tommy Lawton had been England's centre-forward, his skill and fame had become a football legend. Play against any England side was ordered by the necessity of keeping him out of the game.

England's Counter-move

Continental centre-halves, faced with the task of looking after Lawton for an afternoon, had adopted and expanded the "stopper" technique. Wherever he went they went too, shadowing him closely. This was the sole duty. If he was tackled before he could get the ball under control, then he could be prevented from shooting.

The counter-move for England was not in the making of a new centre-forward. It was in an *extra* centre-forward—a second centre-forward who could not be marked because for most of the time he was away fulfilling the main functions of some other position.

This was Mortensen. Playing for most of the game at inside-right, he was to be the surprise packet in front of goal, flying into the open middle to collect the final pass that Lawton would not be taking. Often enough it was Lawton himself, on his way out to the wing, who dropped the ball down with a sideflick of his head at Mortensen's feet as he sped past him.

It was the speed of Mortensen that was the greatest surprise in the switch. He had no track performances of note, but the popular epithet, "electric heels," that went with him in his first great season, was well earned.

I remember a moment in the England v. Sweden International match at Highbury in November, 1947, which demonstrated Mortensen's phenomenal speed. After an attack by Sweden down the left flank, during which Mortensen had gone back in support of his defence, the ball came clear to Mannion standing in the centre circle.

Mortensen began to run. Starting from inside the English penalty area he made straight for the corner of the Swedish penalty area. Now Mannion is a fast mover with a ball at his toes, but, by the time he had reached the Swedish penalty area and pushed the ball behind the Swedish back, Mortensen was there, at the top of his flight, running on to the rolling ball and driving a fierce shot at the Swedish goal.

It was an effort that would have earned most present-day inside-forwards a short rest in midfield. But Mortensen races tirelessly *throughout* every game.

When He's at Centre

Pasty faced and burly, he looks very much the bustling centre-forward of the Ted Drake pattern. Yet on the few occasions when he does play at centre-forward all those qualities which make him such a superior and unique inside-right are cancelled. It was at centre-forward that he played for the losing side in the 1948 Cup Final.

Perhaps with a Mannion and a Shackleton on either side of him he will one day become England's centre-forward. But Mortensen is above all a match winner, an individual who by himself can change the course of a game, score point-winning goals for a side that is being outplayed and whip up the flagging enthusiasm of a side that is wasting its efforts.

Yet Mortensen has nothing of Matthews's skill in the dribble. His is the fast run of the Corinthian footballer—more of a dash than a dribble—which relies on speed and swerve to beat the opponent. His pace gives him no time to wait for the opponent to make the mistake that lets him by. Mortensen has to deceive as he approaches, or, cutting away at an angle, run faster than his opponent can.

It is a dribble of speed that breaks down a defence solely by its opportunism.

Mortensen is the phenomenon of post-war football. Much may be claimed for him: certainly that he has out-dated the long-standing "W" formation attack, with its goal-hungry centre-forward standing between penalty spot and centre circle, waiting to be fed with the ball like a diner who is penned between chair and table, waiting for his soup.

Now the two bottom angles of the "W" have become fluid; they may at any time reshape the letter into any tipsy-looking symbol, may even turn it upside down to make it the initial of Mortensen.

The decreasing number of goals scored by League clubs in recent years continues to augur well for the success of modern defensive methods of play. But the overthrow of these dull "stonewall" tactics—based as they are on the maxim of "we go out on the field with a point already won"—can only benefit the game. The dreary Cup Final of 1947 remains for all time the conclusive condemnation of such play.

Towards Brighter Play

Mortensen is a terrible threat to these methods. Every Saturday afternoon the thrust and verve and unpredictability of his play show up their weakness.

But one Mortensen won't make an English soccer summer. Already there are signs of the emergence of inside-forwards working hard in midfield, but with an opportunist eye open for the chance of a burst through on their own. Lawton's presence at Notts County has produced Jacky Sewell, the inside-right, as one of the leading goal scorers in his Division.

Many more such are needed. When they come the goals will come and the game will again be a better sight for it.

The jacaranda

Mrs. Betteson now fought for the life of the woman who had derided her.

Would help ever come? . . . Continuing the serial of a great new novel

DEFYING PATERSON'S advice, the Portmans, the Bettesons, Mrs. McNairn and her daughter Connie drive on alone: the escape party from Burma is now split in two.

Portman puts on speed along the dusty road, now once more cluttered with bullock carts and refugees on foot. His impatience is his undoing. He loses control and the car rolls over a rocky escarpment.

In the moment of disaster, Mrs. Betteson acts with remarkable presence of mind: Mrs. Betteson, the woman they consider "bats"; the woman of whom Mrs. Portman particularly has made a laughing stock.

As the car lurches over and down, Mrs. Betteson snatches a parasol, levers open a door and pushes Connie clear.

Connie believes she is the only survivor. On the rocky wasteland below, the car lies in twisted wreckage. Burmese care for her and take her to a village, but she resolves to go back to find Paterson and link up with his party. Despite the shock of it, the tragedy, she realizes, has ended ties she has long resented; ties to the narrow, self-centred "British colony." Now she can face Paterson in her own right.

Meanwhile Paterson's car has been repaired, and with Nadia, the Burmese girl, her brother Tuesday, who is Paterson's devoted house boy, and the Eurasian nurse, Miss Allison, he, too, sets off on the road again.

It is Tuesday who first spots Connie, a lone figure signalling with her arms. When he learns of the tragedy, Paterson tells Tuesday to stand by to watch for any signs of life in the wreckage while he drives the others into the village.

On his return, the boy points down the escarpment to the wreckage: "See? A little fire."

PART VI

A Struggle for Survival

AFTER Mrs. Betteson had pushed Connie McNairn out of the car and had begun to fall out herself she hung for a hideous moment hooked by the old-fashioned glacé leather belt of her dress to the handle of the door. She fought frantically to retain her spectacles.

The entanglement with the door lasted about ten seconds. And as she hung, she clapped both hands to her face, partly in instinct to save the glass of her spectacles from smashing into her eyes, partly to hide the final moment of her impact against the wildly rushing slope of sand.

And then she fell. She kept her hands pressed against her face, no thought in her head except "My glasses, my glasses, my glasses!" knowing that without them she would never see. It did not occur to her to be afraid that she was going to be killed.

When she stopped falling she stood straight upright. She had slithered the last half dozen yards or so on her back, digging her feet into the soft sand.

Her instinct was to climb down. When she looked back up the cliff she was a little surprised to find that she could not see the road.

It took her half an hour to climb down to the last shelf of sand. Resting at last, leaning back against the rock, she looked down into the strip of hill-jungle below. Wisps of sun floated through it like white splinters and down somewhere in the middle of it the dusky yellow column of dust from the smashed car was still rising smokily in the sun.

For a moment a great creamy blur enveloped everything. Sweat was pouring down her face and had begun to mist her spectacles. As she took them off and cleaned them with the skirt of her dress, a helpless fog of weakness enveloped her. Then as she put them on again, giving her vague, pecking sort of glance this way and that as if to be sure that they were really clean and in focus, she saw an astonishing thing.

Thirty or forty yards along the strip of sand lay Mrs. McNairn's parasol. She walked vaguely along to it and picked it up.

The wreck of the car lay upturned, on its side, the driving wheel underneath. Somehow a thicker length of bamboo had become interlocked with it and now speared up through the broken glass of the near-side window, exactly like an arrow pinning the whole thing down.

A second later she saw Mrs. Portman. The upturned door of the car had been ripped away and on the sand Mrs. Portman was lying face upward. From the car itself there was no sound of Portman and Betteson and Mrs. McNairn, and there seemed to be no sound either from Mrs. Portman until Mrs. Betteson came close to her and crouched down.

"Oh! God help me, for God's sake help me, oh! God help me, oh! God, oh! God!"

And instinctively Mrs. Betteson opened Mrs. McNairn's parasol and swiftly and tenderly held it above the screaming face.

The thought of lighting a fire did not occur to Mrs. Betteson until late afternoon. She had been occupied with other things. Portman, Betteson and Mrs. McNairn were dead in the car. She had covered their bodies with rugs from the boot.

Almost her first act had been to try to shut the only two windows of the car she could reach. Both had been open. Now the winding gear was slightly buckled, so that neither window could be wound to within more than two or three inches of the top.

She knew perfectly well what would happen to the bodies within twenty or thirty hours.

In the boot of the car were stowed boxes of food which she had some difficulty in getting out. The boot lid had jammed; and after a great struggle to open it in the afternoon heat she decided to leave it until morning. In the back of the car was a single two-gallon petrol can of water. Mrs. McNairn had always complained fussily about it because on the more violent stretches of road it had bounced about, hacking her shins.

On the back window ledge, behind Mrs. McNairn's tightly clenched hands, she found Portman's rifle. It did not seem of very great importance. She had never fired a rifle in her life and she simply took it out and left it, with the water, by Mrs. Portman's side.

NONE of these things gave her the comfort that she found in the possession of her own scissors. They armed her, like her spectacles, with far more power than Portman's rifle.

As soon as she found the scissors she went over to Mrs. Portman. She had carried her bodily out of the clearing into the broken shade of bamboo. Even there the sun came murderously through the lacy upper fronds, penetrating like an acetylene flare the flimsy silk of the parasol.

"I got my scissors. I found them. I still had them round my neck."

Listening to that dithering voice, Mrs. Portman lay motionless on her back, not speaking. She did not speak, simply because her voice had lost its power, and she did not think of laughing at the scissors.

"Now I've got the scissors we can do things."

Mrs. Portman found her voice in a scream. As if not noticing it, Mrs. Betteson said:

"Lie still. I've got some water. I'm going to wash you and make you comfortable."

She took off her dress and, kneeling on the ground, began to cut it to pieces with her scissors.

What she saw on Mrs. Portman's body late that afternoon did not weaken the strength she had gained. She felt frozenly calm. She made a cushion-like pad of her dress. Then she took off her underslip. Deprived of it, she looked, in her long cambric drawers, like a picture of a bather from a faded magazine. Then she took off her corsets. They were pink, with laces. By laying them flat on the ground, wide open, and then by moving Mrs. Portman very gently over until they were underneath her body, she provided a piece of taut pink armour for the pad that lay over the wound. When it was in position at last she laced it lightly and tenderly until it was as comfortable and secure as she could make it.

After that Mrs. Portman seemed to go off into a half-conscious doze.

Quite shocked, Miss Allison did not speak as Connie, angrily poised, stood with the orange as though she would throw it

MRS. BETTESON sat awake all night with Mrs. Portman. It was very silent and, unlike all other nights she had known in the East, it carried no scent of flowers.

In the early hours of the morning she felt the falling of light dew on her bare shoulders, making her cold for the first time. She did not at first know what to do. There were no coverings except those that covered the dead in the car, and at last she lay down with Mrs. Portman under the still-opened parasol, where the dew could not fall, and they lay there together, half-sleeping or half-conscious, until she looked up and saw the first jungle crows gleaming above her, like wheeling aeroplanes of pink-black satin, in the powerful sunrise.

It took her half the morning to open the back of the car. When she had finished she looked, in her drawers, like a bather that had just come drenched, hair wet and plastered, bust dark with moisture, from the sea. She was dripping with sweat as she staggered about with boxes of food. The kit of tools, the pump and tin of oil and a pair of blue overalls of Portman's were with the boxes.

Among the tools she found a hacksaw. It gave her the same delight, coupled with strength, as she got from the finding of the scissors. With the hacksaw she could make some sort of shelter, even a

tree

by H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

tent, simply by cutting bamboo. The practical idea of it filled her with delight.

Now and then, as she made the sections for the shelter, cutting down hard but half-ripened bamboo stalks and tying them with strips of torn material to form a frame, she left off to kneel down and talk with Mrs. Portman. With great tenderness she wetted her lips with water or gave her drinks of it in one of the cups she had found with the food.

"You're all right, aren't you? I'm going to get you some shelter. I'll get you in there, and then——"

And then what? Mrs. Betteson did not know. She broke off suddenly.

And then as she went back to cutting and bending and shaping the bamboos Mrs. Betteson knew what, really, it had been her intention to say. "I'll get you in there and then I'll go for help." That was it.

How? She knew quite well there was no way of getting help and suddenly she dismissed the whole idea rather angrily. Far more important to rig up the shelter.

PUTTING up the shelter took her till the afternoon. It formed a box-like cabin of two sides and a top, about four feet wide and four feet high. The strips of slit bamboo were not closely woven; they let in light and air, and yet, like a venetian blind, gave shadow, too.

In the dead-still suffocating afternoon hardly a breath of air ever moved, and for a long time Mrs. Betteson sat at one end of the shelter, close by Mrs. Portman's head, mechanically fanning backwards and forwards a linen map she had found in the back of the car. It moved the air quietly over Mrs. Portman's face. It fanned a little into her own.

Overhead many more jungle crows had gathered. Every now and then a great shadow of one cut across the narrow tiger bars of shadow and half-shade made by the roof of bamboo, and like a racing cloud darkened Mrs. Portman's body.

The sun hit Mrs. Betteson's back like a flattening blow from a metal press. It swung down and seemed to pin her there. It seemed to shrivel still further the already skinny flesh, and she felt the sickening pain of it run down her spine. In a second it woke with aggravated pain all the nausea of thirst.

She thought of tea. The idea struck across her mind as violently as the sun had hit her shoulders. She had been too occupied with the making of the shelter and too weary in the heat even to think of it again.

Now she was shot through with a new excitement.

"I'm going to make you some tea. How would you like that?" She bent over Mrs. Portman with whispered excitement. "Don't you think that would be nice, eh?" She dithered and wiped the sweat from the yellow shade-barred skeleton of Mrs. Portman's face. "That would be wonderful, eh?"

She began to collect broken lengths of bamboo and pieces of the strawlike fronds. She walked about in the heat naked except for her spectacles and her drawers. And Mrs. Portman, slightly turning her head and seeing that odd figure wandering about in search of bits of bamboo and straw, still as if in pure spectacled absent-mindedness, saw it as a figure in a recollected and ghastly nightmare. It haunted her terribly as it went to and fro, white in the sun.

Mrs. Betteson found three or four rocks and made them into a ring, piling straw and bamboo inside.

It was only when she remembered how she had nothing that would light the fire that she began to be troubled. She stood, vaguely trying to clear her mind. Terribly stupid, she thought, not to have remembered that simple thing. The thought cast her into dejection and she felt the sun hit her flatly, like a stab, on the top of her head.

Then she took off her spectacles to wipe them once more. For a second she felt hideously faint with thirst and sweat and the stab of sun. She groped in the mist of her short-sightedness, holding the spectacles idly against the stuff of her drawers, not troubling to wipe them.

And as she held them there, drooping and rocking in the heat, she felt the sun impinge itself through one of the lenses, magnified into a white pimple of scalding ferocity that made her suddenly cry out.

She bent down at once over her pile of bamboo and leaves and straw, holding her spectacles over it until their magnifying awoke the first orange flower of fire. In her excitement she fumbled and dropped the spectacles. They fell with a tinkle against one of the stones and she let out a cry of joy and dismay as she groped and snatched them up. The dismay increased as she saw the thin crack the stone had made across the edge of the left lens—it had always been her weaker eye—but the joy increased, too, as she rammed the spectacles on to her nose and gazed at the flame of her own miraculously created fire.

A few moments later the smoke had risen like a column of pearl-grey feather as high as the wheeling crows.

IN the village Miss Allison had discovered a deserted hut, a single room of palm screen on teak-wood piles, a few mats of woven cane on the floor. On the steps of the next hut a saturnine Burmese woman, more Naga in her ugliness than Shan, sat chewing betel-nut.

In order to ask about the hut, Miss Allison had been forced, for the first time for many weeks, to speak Burmese. And for the first time she did not feel that it humiliated her.

She found Connie McNairn walking up and down the bazaar.

"There's an empty hut at the end of the bazaar," she told her. "I thought we could share it. The nights are cooler up here."

"I'll stop in the tent, thank you. I always sleep in the tent."

"Yes, I know. But I thought Mr. Paterson might like it. He's had a terribly hard drive."

"Why are you so concerned with what Mr. Paterson does and feels and where he sleeps?" Connie changed the subject abruptly. "I'm going to buy some fruit."

"I really wouldn't," Miss Allison said.

"I want oranges. I'm thirsty." She began pointing to small green-gold pyramids of fruit. The light was dying, purple and copper.

In the dust a few small fowls plucked

Oppressed by a feeling of futility, Paterson lay on the ground while Tuesday and Nadia prepared the tea

about, vivid green and scarlet and peacock-blue. Under the open-fronted eaves of palm the melon faces peered out, squinting.

Connie picked up oranges and said, in English, "How much?"

"I really wouldn't," Miss Allison said. Behind the basket piles of fruit the melon faces spoke back, in Burmese.

"It's not a good thing to buy fruit in these villages," Miss Allison said.

"Don't be so fussy!" Connie said. "Much better to have a little of our own water. Let me get that. I'll put iodine in it."

"I loathe iodine."

"Most people do. It makes the water safe, that's all."

"It's just fussiness," Connie said. "After all, I was drinking water all day yesterday and that had no iodine in it, and what's it done to me?"

Quite shocked, Miss Allison did not speak. Connie, angrily poised, fretful, rather pale in the gaudy cross-light of dying sun, stood with a green orange in her hands. All of Miss Allison's training became offended by the emotional English girl standing there shouting and angry as if she were going to throw the orange at the faces peering out from the shadow behind the fruit piles, and then she pulled herself together and walked away.

Some minutes later she was surprised to see Paterson's car coming like a ball of dust up the road. Connie ran excitedly past her. The car was besieged by companies of cream-brown boys and in the front seat Tuesday sat god-like in the football shirt.

"You're soon back!" Connie said. "There wasn't anything, was there?"

"Odd thing," Paterson said. "There was a fire."

Connie spoke rapidly: "I said so, I said so, I told you that."

"What fire could that be?" Miss Allison said. "Not the car?"

"Not the car, of course it would be the car," Connie said.

Paterson said tiredly: "It could be anything. The car still burning. A bit of jungle still smouldering."

"The same thing really," Connie said.

"Could it be anyone alive?" Miss Allison said.

"We're going to find that out."

"Is it necessary? Not tonight? It's impossible," Connie said.

"Tomorrow."

"It means another awful delay. Must we?"

"Let's have some tea," Paterson said. "I'm done."

He began to drive the car slowly down through the village bazaar to the huts.

He lay flat in the dust while Tuesday made tea over the fire already built by Nadia. Lying on his face, he felt himself slip beyond the edges of physical tiredness. He was oppressed by a sensation of futility. It had begun to grow on the whole idea of the journey ever since Portman had gone ahead with the other car. Now it lay on all his thoughts like a mould, stultifying and sour.

For a whole day he had reproached himself for allowing it to happen, for allowing Portman to override him, for allowing his own judgment to become the victim of the half-panic, the littleness, of the other man. It was a situation, he felt, that a good wholesale row could have prevented. He had simply let it drift into a tragic mess.

And now someone was alive down there. Who?

The voice of Tuesday gently aroused him: "Tea, Patson. Tea." Half-blindly he drank the tea, into which the boy had dropped a slice of lime, and felt the hot fumes of it deliciously stimulating as he held his face there.

Gradually, as the heat of the tea floated out of him and left him languid but refreshed, his thoughts stopped their repetitive wheel-like reverberation, troubling him no longer. The decision seemed a very simple one; it lay coolly there in his mind. He sat up.

What he had to do was somehow to get down to the bottom of the gorge: no matter what it cost or how hard it was to do. Whatever was happening in the south, whether the Japanese were a hundred or fifty or only a dozen miles behind, whether cholera or typhoid or malaria were spreading up the road as fast as the migration itself—nothing of it seemed to matter very much. Whoever was alive there had to be got out.

"Bath, Patson sir. Bath."

Tuesday was with him again, smiling. He smiled back, comforted by the wonderful thought that whatever happened the boy was always there: tea Patson, bath Patson, breakfast Patson; monumentally constant, complaintless, illuminated always by defeatless smiles.

"On other side of tent, Patson."

"Thanks. I'll go."

"Nurse Miss and Miss Con sleep in hut."

"Right."

"Something to do, Patson?"

"Yes," Paterson said. "Find out about a path."

"Yes, Patson."

Paterson got up and walked over to where, on the far side of the tent and the hut, Tuesday had poured water in the portable bath. From the little village floated the breath, half-sweet, half-acrid, of flowers and evening fires of charcoal. Lights fretted the upper parts of the stilted houses and little curls of laughter spun down the bazaar.

He sat down in the cold, delicious water, looking up at the stars. They reminded him of Nadia. In a moment she would come out to him; she would pour the water over his back and bring him, perhaps, a glass of gin with a little pressing of lime; she might even wash his hair and pour water over him from a bucket, so that it ran like a slow waterfall over his head and chest.

"Can I speak with you, please?"

Startled, he looked back over his shoulder. Standing ten or fifteen yards away was Miss Allison. She had put on a kind of white hospital coat, so that she looked like the spectre of something professional standing stiffly there in the darkness.

"I'm in my bath," he said.

"Don't mind me. Men in their baths are just bits of anatomy to me."

"Fire away. What is it?"

She came a pace or two nearer.

"It's about Miss McNairn. She's not well."

"She's tired and hysterical," he said. "After all, she's just lost her mother."

"That's just it. She doesn't think she's lost her mother."

The thought cut crisply into his feeling of contentment. He had taken the death of Mrs. McNairn and the Bettesons so much for granted that now he was angered freshly.

"That's just letting her imagination get her down. It's damned silly."

"She's running a temperature. A hundred and one."

"Just hysteria and excitement. You ought to know that. You saw her."

"I know. Yes. But it seems she was drinking water yesterday. The peasants gave it her after the accident. Perhaps you'd come and look at her? You can tell her what you're going to do tomorrow. That's what frets her."

"We're going to look for Portman and the rest. There's somebody alive down there. Must be."

"I wouldn't tell her that." The nurse had remained all the time at a respectful distance behind him. He turned with almost offensive sharpness to look at her.

"Why not?"

"She doesn't want anyone to be alive."

"Did she say that?"

"No."

"She's just hysterical and tired."

"Her one idea is to go on and get out of the country."

"Very natural. Is that all?"

"No. She's tormented by the idea of her mother. She's afraid she'll be alive"—the nurse spoke with the rather correct blunt English of someone who does not speak it as a native tongue, so that what she said sounded stilted and incredible and unreal—"and that it will be you who will bring her back."

"Good God," he said.

In a pretence of washing he thrashed about madly with his hands so that the stars above were suddenly like golden-green shoals of darting creatures he could not catch. He turned in time to see the nurse walking away.

"I'll come in," he said.

"Thank you," she said. "Be careful of mosquitoes. It's warm."

"There are no mosquitoes up here."

"I just killed one in the hut."

"Yes? They never touch me. Hate the taste of me."

"There's always a first time," she said.

As she disappeared he swished water all over his body and up into his face, thrashing about again and again with his hands.

A moment later he heard the voice of Nadia, who had come up in silence to bring him the drink he wanted. At the sight of him sitting there angrily thrashing at the water she suddenly burst out laughing loudly.

He began laughing, too, and took the drink from her hands. She was kneeling by the bath. She had smoothed and oiled her hair so that it was like a black and polished shell; there were fresh flowers in the side of it, a crimson one and a tasselled spray of milky cream, and there was a smell of fresh tanaka powder deliciously about her face.

She kept laughing for a moment or two longer, her teeth white in the darkness, and then pressed her head against his water-sprinkled shoulder, half-kissing him, half laughing, with her mouth against his neck.

And as he sat there, his own mouth against her, the water gathering into drops on his body, the drink in his hands, he felt he wanted to grip very tightly, through the thin cream muslin, the shoulders of the girl; he wanted for ever the simplicity of possessing her. In all that happened neither she nor the boy had anything but that same complaintless constancy.

When, after a few moments, Paterson had finished his drink and she had gone back to the tent to get him another, he heard the first cry of jackals, northward in the hills. It was a sound that always troubled him; and now it brought back another uncertain rush of thought about Portman and the accident to the car.

He was drying himself, standing up, when Nadia came back. She had brought not only his drink but another towel, a clean white shirt and long trousers.

She stooped without a word and began to dry his legs and feet.

Five minutes later he went towards the hut that Connie and Miss Allison shared. The little bazaar had not closed. Simple candle lamps shaded by half-moons of paper illuminated all the fronts of the open-fronted raised-up huts. And pausing for a moment to look at it, he saw Tuesday come floating out of it, bearing an armful of papaias, with a bunch of small green bananas on the other shoulder.

He stopped, thought with pleasure for a moment of the papaias, sugared and cool, that the boy would prepare for him, and then asked about the path.

Yes, the boy said, there was a path. It went down into the gorge from the other side. It was a bad path and hard to find because every year it got washed away by monsoon rain and was not beaten out again until the dry season by hunters. It was very difficult, but he had found a guide.

What guide?

A boy. He was a wonderful guide and he knew the path.

He'd better be wonderful, Paterson said.

He was very wonderful. He had only one eye but it was a most wonderful eye to see things.

All right, Paterson said, the three of them would start at dawn.

To be continued next week

WITH MY FEET UP
by Ian Fox

The other day there was a reference in a gossip column to a woman who was "wearing a will-power frock." Which makes it seem as if, in these days, a girl needs beauty *and* brains if she is to keep up her position.

Conversation Piece

I see they're planning to put an end to bottle parties. If that happens, Britain will be just like America in prohibition days.

You mean speakeasies?

Yes. Knock three times and say you're a friend of Mrs. Fitzwiggle.

At least bottle parties would become exciting. With luck there might even be police raids.

I think they're trying to turn us all into solitary drinkers. You know, the old bottle behind the bureau.

I shall start now to train myself to like orange squash.

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This week John Bull announces its Free Family Insurance Scheme for 1949.

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The benefits and conditions are printed in full on page 26 of this issue.

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GIBBS HAPPY FAMILIES

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2 ONE DAY Master Morn the Milkman's son sees Gibbs in red, blue and green cases. "I'll get those," he says "the colours will cheer Dad up!"

3 "WHAT a lovely, *clean* taste," says Miss Morn the Milkman's daughter, "and we love each having a different coloured Gibbs case."

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That's a marvellous idea! His old set is a real antique, poor boy—he's had it for years and it certainly looks the worse for wear. How he'll thank me when he starts shaving with his new Gillette razor and Gillette blades. Both are precision instruments—made for each other. Gillette Razor Sets are packed in attractive cases. Sets from 3/1 to 30/-, including Purchase Tax.

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No. 44 Set. Leatherette Case—Pocket Edition (5 Blue Gillette Blades) **5/6,** inc. tax.

Back in five years

by MICHAEL GILBERT

ILLUSTRATED BY A. R. WHITEAR

But for one mistake, the forger's disappearance would be a mystery yet. Still, the police had to admit it was a close shave—a very close shave

IN THE EARLY THIRTIES, when I was a junior inspector attached to the uniformed branch in a North London division, there were a number of known counterfeiters at work in London. I don't mean that we knew their names and addresses, for they tend to be shy people, but a surprising number of facts about them and their products were filed and tabulated at the Criminal Records Office and in the M.O. file.

There were forgers of Post Office Savings books, and there were those who specialized in passports and share certificates. But the kings of the trade were the forgers and utterers of bank notes. And the king of them all was a certain shy, unobtrusive genius who manufactured the "Beauties."

His identity was, of course, a mystery. He was known to us only by his one-pound notes, finely etched and most scrupulously printed.

In a lot of ways they were a better product than the stuff that was being turned out by H.M. Mint. That young lady who sits up in an inset in the top left-hand corner (on the genuine pound notes she looks rather a pudding-faced young person) —well, in his productions she was a miracle of dignified beauty. That's what gave them their name "Beautiful Britannias," or "Beauties."

And you can take it from me that there wasn't a policeman in the Metropolis who wouldn't have given his belt and buttons for a chance to lay hands on the artist.

However, as it happens—and as it happens in most police work—it wasn't one man or even a few men who got on the track of the forger. When this happy event finally came to pass it was the result of a combination of luck and instinct backed up by the hard, slogging work of a great number of people.

We had regretfully decided that in the case of the Beauties we were up against one of those rarities in the field of crime—an entirely solitary and single-handed operator; a man with at least one god-like attribute, the strength which is said to come from loneliness.

He must have made his own plate—it may have taken him a year or more of patient trial and error, cutting, smoothing and sizing. He even had a rotation system which enabled him to change the numbering.

But it was his method of distribution that put him at the top of the class.

Having printed a number of very excellent pound notes, he rationed himself to about twenty a week. These he would cash personally, going to shops and post offices all over London, and never to the same one twice. He would purchase some small object costing not more than a few pence or a shilling, pay with a pound note and pocket the change.

The system was laborious, but almost fool-proof. And, but for one small thing, I really have my doubts whether we should have got on to him.

The thing was he had a weakness for pawnbrokers. Perhaps it was because pawnbrokers' shops are places which have a wide variety of things which you can pick up for a small sum: and they are usually rather dark and not very crowded and don't make difficulties about change. Anyway, it proved his undoing.

For pawnbrokers, as you may know, are people who like to work in very closely with the police. There's nothing underhand about it. It just happens to pay both sides. There's a Pawnbrokers' List of Stolen Articles which we publish at Scotland Yard, and most pawnbrokers make a practice of reporting anything suspicious to the local station. The local police, in return, keep a special eye on their shops, which are a tempting target to the light-fingered fraternity.

Well, over the months and years, reports piled up of these pound notes being received by pawnbrokers. So, just on the chance (that's a phrase which features pretty prominently in police work), a letter was sent round to all pawnbrokers saying that if they should happen to notice a man or woman coming into their shop who wasn't a regular customer, and who wanted to make a small purchase and proffered a brand new pound note for it, then would they please make a careful note of his description, etc., etc.

After a time the descriptions started to

Mountjoy had walked out, put up the notice—and dematerialized

add up. It was extraordinarily fascinating, sitting back in an office watching a living person being built up out of fractions, watching his features line themselves in, and his identity declare itself.

We got a picture of a man, middle-sized to small, plump, soft-spoken, with white, pudgy hands, strong black hair and weak, rather peering eyes. His clothes naturally varied from time to time and from place to place but the essentials were the same.

A very wide and elaborate net was then spread. I won't bore you with all the details, but you can gather the scope of it when I tell you it meant stationing policemen within call of almost every pawnshop which had not yet been visited and arranging a simple system of signals with the pawnbrokers themselves.

And that was how, at the beginning of June, 193–, the police at last caught sight of Mr. Mountjoy and followed him discreetly home to No. 14 Malpas Street. This proved to be a small shop in North London, with living quarters attached, and an independent flat over it.

SOME further facts now came to light. All seemed to point to the one conclusion. To start with, Mr. Mountjoy's business was that of a one-man printer and type-maker; very suitable, we felt, allowing its owner to possess and operate various small machines and lathes without exciting suspicion. Then again, he was a solitary man, who, according to Mr. Crump, of No. 12, his nearest neighbour, spent much of his time out of his shop, apparently on journeys round London.

"Looking for commissions, I expect," said Mr. Crump. "Not that he seems to get much work. Manages to do very well for himself, none the less."

I was in charge of these local inquiries, and sensing a certain amount of rancour in that last remark, I guessed that there might be some trade rivalry. Mr. Crump was a newsagent and printer himself. However, he was unable to help me much, because he didn't know very much. But he did say that Mr. Mountjoy seemed to do a lot of work at night.

In some trepidation, because we didn't want to expose our hand too soon, I tried Mrs. Ireland, who lived in the flat over Mr. Mountjoy's shop. She was a middle-aged party, intensely respectable and slightly deaf. I visited her one morning in the well-worn guise of an inspector of gasmeters, and found her surprisingly willing to talk.

She, unlike Mr. Crump, had the very highest opinion of Mr. Mountjoy. Possibly he *was* one who kept himself to himself but there was no harm that she could see in that. Better than clumping about sticking your nose into what didn't concern you. This, I gathered, was a back-hander at Mr. Crump, whom she didn't like. Unfortunately, her deafness prevented her from being able to corroborate the story of night work.

Well, there it was. You now know all that we knew at that point and you can see how we were fixed. I had no doubt in my mind. The description fitted. The set-up was exactly what we had imagined. The printer's shop—the night work—the journeys round London.

There was only one thing to do—take a search warrant and chance the odds.

Accordingly, on Midsummer Day, 193–, just after four o'clock in the afternoon, I took Sergeant Husband with me and walked over to Malpas Street to put the matter to the test. And as I turned into the road the first thing that struck my eye was that damned notice and I realized that we had missed our man. How narrowly we had missed him became apparent as we pursued our inquiries.

The notice? It was pinned to the door of the shop. Written in a copperplate hand on a neat white card, it said: BACK IN FIVE YEARS.

No. 14 was the end house of a block of seven. It had the shop entrance in front, and an independent side entrance which led up to Mrs. Ireland's flat.

Now the curious thing was this. Five minutes before we had arrived, several people had seen Mr. Mountjoy come out and pin that notice on his door. But after that no one could say which way he had gone. This didn't all come out at once, but inquiries in the street, then and later, only deepened the mystery.

For instance, Mrs. Ireland had been sitting at her window, which overlooked the point where the side street joined the main. Although she might be deaf, she certainly wasn't short-sighted and she happened to have been keeping her eyes open for the postman. She was prepared to swear that Mr. Mountjoy had neither passed the end of the side road nor gone down it.

Suppose, therefore, he had turned to the left outside his front door? But Mr. Crump in No. 12, and the barber in No. 8 had both been in their shops the whole time and were positive that he had not gone past them.

Had he gone back into his shop or the living-room behind it? But these were most undeniably empty, and had, besides, the sort of "packed-up" appearance of rooms whose owner has left them deliberately. The gas and electricity were turned off, the larder was empty and tools and kit were stacked neatly.

There was a door leading into the garden, and this was locked. That, by itself, didn't prove anything, of course, but the garden was a dead end. There was a very high, glass-bottle-topped wall on the street side, the blank elevation of another house at the end and a garden full of little Crumps on the right.

Mr. Mountjoy, in fact, had walked into the street, pinned up his famous notice and then dematerialized.

But, unlike the conjurer's lady assistant, he not only disappeared, he stayed disappeared. And that is not such an easy thing to do—not in this country, anyway, especially when the police are on the look-out for you and have your full description.

However, as with everything else, Mr. Mountjoy managed it competently enough.

THE police force, like the Army, believes in moving its executives around, and it wasn't until well over four years later—nearly five—that I found myself back at the same North London police station, attached this time to the plain-clothes branch.

One of the first places I visited was Malpas Street, and there, still, was the notice: BACK IN FIVE YEARS.

In a district like that you'd have imagined that it would have been torn down or defaced long ago. But it hadn't.

I gathered, in fact, that it had become a sort of local tradition. Mr. Mountjoy had always been a mystery man to the neighbourhood, and his reputation had been nowise diminished by his dramatic disappearance and the interest of the police in his whereabouts.

There was a strong local feeling, amounting almost to an obsession, that five years after his disappearance (on the very day and at the very hour) Mr. Mountjoy would reappear and take that notice down again.

What would happen then no one could suggest.

I asked the station sergeant about the place. For instance, why hadn't it been relet or taken over by the authorities? Mr. Mountjoy, I gathered, owned the building but the rates must be mounting up and there was ground rent to pay and so on, and anyway it was a nice little shop and living quarters. We didn't talk about requisitioning in those days, but we had some powers. Apparently, however, all this had been foreseen by Mr. Mountjoy.

The day before he disappeared he had handed to Mrs. Ireland a sum in notes (genuine ones this time) sufficient to deal with all outgoings *for exactly five years*. At the end of that time, he said, if he hadn't come back she could sell the house and keep the proceeds. And he had even executed a legal document enabling her to do this.

In short, she was to wait for him for five years, and at the end of that time, like the frog in the fairy story, she was to have her reward—unless the fairy prince had reappeared to claim his own.

It sounded pretty fantastic to me.

The next thing that happened, about three weeks later, was the arrival at the station of a badly worried Mr. Crump, with a tale that No. 14 was haunted.

He was so clear about it that we gave more attention to his story than the police usually accord to psychic manifestations. Also, of course, we were interested in that particular house.

"Scraping, cutting and emery-papering," said Mr. Crump, his great red face moist but earnest. "Every night—about midnight or one o'clock. Just like he used to. I don't like it. Nor the wife don't like it. She's talking of moving if it isn't stopped."

"Did you go down and look in?" I asked. "Was there a light on in the shop?"

"Of course there wasn't no light on," said Mr. Crump. "Hasn't the electricity been cut off? I've told you, it's not yooman, this noise isn't."

When I suggested that it might be rats, I thought Mr. Crump was going to detonate, so I hurriedly promised him that we'd look into it and he departed.

WE had the keys of the shop, so I let myself in that evening, going after dark to avoid causing any undue stir. I took a torch and made a thorough investigation. It was obvious no one had been there. The dust was inches thick over everything, and the place—well, it *smelt* deserted, if you know what I mean.

When I came out I found half Malpas Street gathered outside armed with sticks and bottles. Apparently a small boy had seen my torch flashing and the crowd were just summoning up courage to break in and lay the ghost when I stepped out.

After that, of course, there was no stopping the stories.

Mr. Crump appeared about a month later with an ultimatum.

Either the police "did something" or he was going to clear out himself. He couldn't stand it any longer. His wife had already gone on an indefinite visit to her married sister and trade was falling off. The sinister reputation of No. 14 was beginning to corrupt No. 12.

"All right," I said at last. "I'll come along myself tonight and we'll both listen."

When I came off duty at about half-past ten that evening, I went along to Malpas Street and Mr. Crump let me in. We sat in his parlour, which was on the first floor overlooking the street, and we drank beer and talked for a bit, and at midnight, at my suggestion, we turned the lights out and made ourselves comfortable in chairs near the window.

After a bit I must have dozed, because I woke up to feel Mr. Crump gripping my arm.

He said nothing, but I gathered from his breathing, which he was trying to control, that something had happened.

Then, in the stuffy blackness of the room, I heard it, too. It was a thin intermittent burr, which sounded like a very sharp edge cutting across some tough substance. Then came the sound of scraping, and then the cutting started again.

I jumped up, leapt at the door, nearly

THIS WEEK'S COVER

WHEN Arthur Horner, a thirty-two-year old Australian artist, arrived in Britain last year, it was snowing. For Horner, that was something wonderful; he'd never seen snow before. Its lighting effects fascinated him. He turned out snow scene after snow scene. This particular one was painted near Kensington, London, were he has settled in with his Australian wife, also an artist

"So I says, 'So help me, Mildred, if you don't marry me I'll join the Foreign Legion.'"—"And what did she say?"

broke my neck on the stairs, and three seconds later I was out in the street. I had my key at the ready and I snapped open the door of No. 14 and switched on my torch.

There was no one there. Nothing had been disturbed at all. There wasn't even the trace of a rat or mouse paw in the dust. I hadn't thought that there would be. There had been something indefinably human about that sound.

When I got back to Mr. Crump, I found he had turned on the light and poured out some more beer. He seemed much more cheerful. I think that half his trouble had been that no one believed his story.

Also, as we were finishing our beer, he said something which surprised me.

"Thanks be," he said. "I've only to put up with it for one more week."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Work it out for yourself," he said. "It's the seventeenth of June. Four years and fifty-one weeks ago he left. Said he'd be back in five years. Very methodical man was Mr. Mountjoy."

I could find no comment to make.

It was quite illogical and fantastic, and I felt that we were making fools of ourselves, but in the end I agreed, weakly, to post two sergeants to watch the back of the house while I kept an unobtrusive eye on the front.

If Mr. Mountjoy was going to maintain his reputation for punctuality he was due in the street at four o'clock in the afternoon: accordingly, at five to four I turned the corner at the far end of the road and started strolling nonchalantly towards No. 14, stopping every now and then to look in at the various shop windows.

It was a true midsummer day, warm and windless, and the children were still in school, so that by Malpas Street standards it was almost quiet.

I looked at my watch and saw that it was just short of four o'clock. And Malpas Street was still most definitely empty.

At that moment, in the warm summer silence, I heard it again. I want to be quite clear about this. It was exactly and undeniably the same sound that I had heard that night when I sat up over Mr. Crump's shop. But it did not come from No. 14.

It was from the same side of the street but much lower down.

I moved cautiously along until I could locate it. It came from the barber's shop at No. 8, where Toni Etrillo, the barber, was shaving one of his swarthy compatriots. The burr and the rasp as the cut-throat razor passed across the strong black stubble—these were unmistakable.

And in that moment the secret of Mr. Mountjoy's disappearance became as abundantly clear to me as it probably already has to you.

The first thing I did was purely symbolical. I took out my knife and levered out the tack which held up that notice. I was about to tear it up but thought better of it and dropped it in my pocket.

Conscious that a dozen pairs of eyes were watching from curtained windows, I went round into the side street and rang Mrs. Ireland's door bell.

When she opened the door I didn't do anything dramatic; I just beckoned her out into the street and signalled to one of the sergeants to accompany us and we all walked back to the police station.

For the greater part of the way we were silent, but I felt, in justice, that one thing had to be said.

"A marvellously well kept-up impersonation, Mr. Mountjoy. It's nothing new for a man to dress as a woman, and I have even heard of cases before where a landlord became his own lodger. But—it's a great mistake for any man to do his shaving last thing at night."

It's all right in pairs

by HERBERT HODGE

Union Jack or the kilt—either will stop a Frenchman's car

IF ANY MAN wants to know how to provoke a modern woman, I can recommend one sure way. Tell her there are some things a man can do that a woman can't. Not that I'd dream of provoking women deliberately. It isn't only wrong; it's dangerous.

But I did it in all innocence the other week when I suggested that a woman couldn't go hoboing and hitch-hiking about the world in the same way as a man—owing, as *I* thought, to the difference in sex. Now I know better. There's nothing a modern woman can't do if she puts her mind to it.

I've got a delightful letter here from a girl of twenty-two, telling me that she and another girl have hitch-hiked over most of England and quite a lot of France. She is giving herself another two years to finish off Europe; then she intends to tackle Canada in the same way.

If the Boss Knew

She's lucky in being a member of a profession that gets long holidays; but she asks me to keep the details dark. She fears that neither her bosses nor her clients would approve of the way she travels.

Girls of her type, I gather, are not supposed to stand in the gutter thumbing rides—not even when they're on holiday—because it's so undignified.

But she says it's quite safe—provided you obey the one important rule for girls. Go in pairs; and never on any account, separate. "We found," she says, "that hitch-hikers in France are well organized. If you stand too near a French thumber's pitch you're likely to get a black eye for spoiling his chances."

The secret of successful hitch-hiking on the Continent is, apparently, to get out early in the morning and wear a Union Jack pinned to your back. The best car-stopper is the kilt. Frenchmen are fascinated by the traditional Scottish dress.

Liked Roughing It

I was at least right the other week in saying that a woman needs to be extraordinarily tough to attempt this kind of thing.

My correspondent glories in her toughness—as a contrast, I suppose, to the extremely ladylike appearance she is compelled to put on in her professional capacity.

She says that she and her friend met very few other girls. "Boys of all races accepted us as equals. We showed them just how tough a woman can be. We went unwashed when no water was available; we dried our wet clothes on our beds as we slept; and once we lived on bread, margarine and water for five days. We never saw a bath all the time. Sometimes we had to sleep on straw, but we found it warm and comfortable."

Whenever they could they slept in youth hostels—which cost only sevenpence a night in France. You don't get waited on, of course, but you get a bed and facilities for cooking.

All the same, I still think it would be very difficult for a girl to hitch-hike over the enormous distances of Canada—especially if, like the reader who first asked the question, she had no money and had to rely on odd jobs to keep her going.

It's true I've only received one letter agreeing with me—and that happens to be from a man.

Another woman disagrees with my remarks about the difficulty of a girl navvying in Canada and working in places like lumber-camps. During the war she worked in English forestry camps, and for a time was the only woman in a male gang.

"There was no unpleasantness or stupidity about my sex," she says, "either from the men or myself. We worked in comradeship and real friendliness. I'm all for more mixing, both socially and at work. It makes for a better outlook and more understanding."

I agree. But when you're thinking about the world as a whole you've got to remember that this country is only a tiny island—crowded with people from end to end. And that makes a difference to many things; including our feelings about sex.

Wherever you go in this country you find the sexes fairly evenly balanced—and for that very reason able to achieve a more easy, tolerant and civilized relationship than in some other parts of the world.

In places where the balance between the sexes is very uneven the relations are apt to be uneven, too. What some of my women correspondents refer to as "this outmoded sex-barrier myth" may be outmoded in this country, but it isn't outmoded everywhere.

Ten Men and a Girl

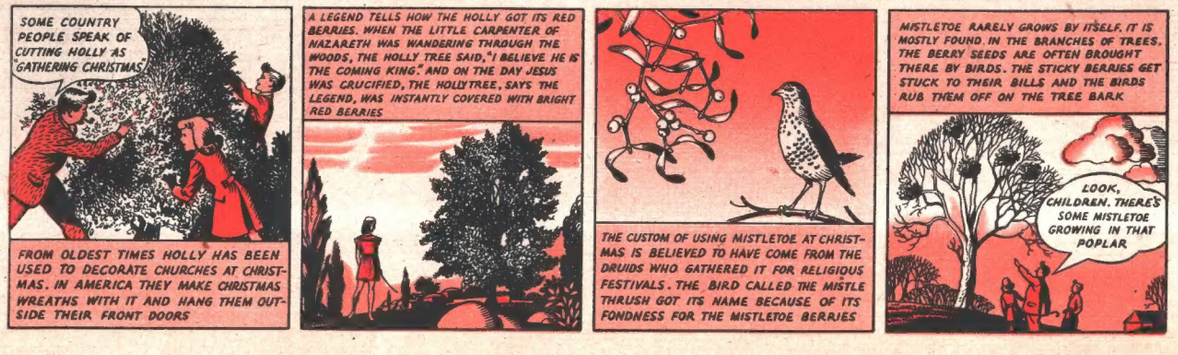
In places where you've got ten men to one woman, or ten women to one man, there's bound to be tension. And when you're the only woman, or even the only pair of women, wandering across the wide-open spaces of a great continent, where there may not be another woman within hundreds of miles, you can hardly help causing a certain amount of tension if you decide to settle down for a while to work in a gang of men. (If, of course, a gang-boss was willing to allow it.)

Mind you, I'm not suggesting a girl would be in any particular danger. What I'm worried about is her shockingly upsetting effect on the poor men.

These tough girl-pioneers should at least pause and ask themselves if it's fair. If they think it is I've got no more to say. As a man, I can only hope there will soon be enough girl-hobos to provide an even balance.

UNCLE ANDY

Red Berries


SOME COUNTRY PEOPLE SPEAK OF CUTTING HOLLY AS "GATHERING CHRISTMAS"
FROM OLDEST TIMES HOLLY HAS BEEN USED TO DECORATE CHURCHES AT CHRISTMAS. IN AMERICA THEY MAKE CHRISTMAS WREATHS WITH IT AND HANG THEM OUTSIDE THEIR FRONT DOORS
A LEGEND TELLS HOW THE HOLLY GOT ITS RED BERRIES. WHEN THE LITTLE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH WAS WANDERING THROUGH THE WOODS, THE HOLLY TREE SAID, "I BELIEVE HE IS THE COMING KING." AND ON THE DAY JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED, THE HOLLY TREE, SAYS THE LEGEND, WAS INSTANTLY COVERED WITH BRIGHT RED BERRIES
THE CUSTOM OF USING MISTLETOE AT CHRISTMAS IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COME FROM THE DRUIDS WHO GATHERED IT FOR RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS. THE BIRD CALLED THE MISTLE THRUSH GOT ITS NAME BECAUSE OF ITS FONDNESS FOR THE MISTLETOE BERRIES
MISTLETOE RARELY GROWS BY ITSELF. IT IS MOSTLY FOUND IN THE BRANCHES OF TREES. THE BERRY SEEDS ARE OFTEN BROUGHT THERE BY BIRDS. THE STICKY BERRIES GET STUCK TO THEIR BILLS AND THE BIRDS RUB THEM OFF ON THE TREE BARK
LOOK, CHILDREN. THERE'S SOME MISTLETOE GROWING IN THAT POPLAR

RESULTS and NEW PRIZE OFFERS

"BULLETS" 1,657 FIRST PRIZE, £250: J. Gibbs, 49 Heybridge Drive, Barkingside, Ilford:

SHOULDN'T BE HOLY ONLY—MAKE CHURCHES HOMELY!

SECOND PRIZE, £25: A. Kirby, 25 Stirling Street, Poulton, Wallasey: SPURRING US ON—FAT LOT, LITTLE FAT!

THIRD PRIZE, £10: Mrs. S. Wright, 5 Croft Road, Isleham, Ely: AT CHRISTMAS—BE KIND—BE KID!

OTHER AWARDS: £9: H. R. Hughes, 122 Bordesley Green East, Birmingham, 9: TURNED OVER—"BED," NOT SO "HARD." £8: J. S. Heaton, 165 Bury New Road, Breightmet, nr. Bolton: SHIVERING WORLD—REFUSING "FUEL" FROM ABOVE. £7: W. B. Martin, 13 Orleans Road, London, N.19: SHORT-SIGHTED — HIGH-HANDED BOSS — SOON SHORT-HANDED. £6: G. M. Stewart, 96 Glenhead Street, Possilpark, Glasgow: SHOULDN'T BE GAMBLE — MATRIMONY, WITH TWO "HEADS."

FIVE of £5: F. Cook, The Bungalow, West Lydford, Taunton: WAITS IN THE QUEUE—HOUSEWIFE—AND FOOD SHIP. A. Wall, 39 Long Acre, Nechells, Birmingham, 7: THE DEVIL—PUT *Gas-oven* INTO *Head*. W. Wardle, 413 Old Walsall Road, Birmingham, 22a: FORGET THE PAST AND —REPASTS—PASS THE PASTE! C. H. Williams, 32a Meadow Road, Southborough, Kent: STEEL—ASTRIDE "OLD IRON," GRANDPA! P. G. Williams, 12 Drinkwater Gardens, Gaer Estate, Newport, Mon: IN AN UGLY MOOD—FOX—HIS SPORT'S THREATENED!

Above 12 winners also receive 14-lb. Christmas Parcels. Winners of 20 further Parcels and 100 Cakes have been notified and 1,500 "Good Shots" posted.

This week's Prize Radiogram

RULES 1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit —the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated January 22, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

Cash and Radiogram

heading Prizes value over

£250 1st Prize plus £55 Radiogram **£500**

£25 2nd Prize—£10 3rd Prize

£9, £8, £7, £6, 5 of £5

50 MYSTERY PRIZES each value **30s.**

1,000 "Good Shots," with £10 Opportunity

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "Examples"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

The 1949 Picture
Tyrant Winter
Lesson Of The Past
Plumber Cripps
To Get Things Shipshape
Mountain Of Armaments

We Wish / A Handful
In His Dreams / Doesn't Fit
Primitive Man / Feeble
Whistling / A New Toy

Words, Words, Words
Becoming A Necessity
Bacon And Eggs
Big Bad Wolf
Heard For Miles
Now Dad's A Terrier

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

I'm Not....., But
If It Weren't For .....

No More..... / ..... Itself
Easy On The..... / Properly.....

MORE HOUSEHOLD PRIZES for XWORDS

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Extra Sets of Answers on plain paper, same rate of Entry-fee. Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated January 15.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature upon coupon constitutes agreement to Rules.

Awards value up to

£100 1st Prize and Awards **£250**

value £25 amongst Runners-up.

★ Grand prize with each Award value £1 and over—a 100-piece Breakfast, Dinner and Tea Service!

XWORD 609 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Words. 2, Thud or Thug. 3, Trams. 5, Sure. 8, Dole. 10, Koff. 12, Yarn. DOWN: 1, Wire. 2, Taxes. 4, Fare. 6, Runs. 7, Flam. 8, Delay. 9, Role. 11, Foe.

THREE £100 SHARERS: Mrs. R. Burns, 27 Station Road, Coxhoe, Co. Durham; Mrs. D. J. Francis, Flat 135 Upper High Street, Lye, Stourbridge; Mrs. I. Simpson, 72 Haigh Lane, Chadderton, Oldham.

Awards value £25 for Runners-up shared between 12 entrants. In addition Winners and Runners-up receive 6-lb. Christmas Feasts.

CLUES FOR XWORD 613

Across

1. A lie is probably not very difficult to
4. Wooden one may be all right for certain jobs
6. You should make sure you've the money before you do this
9. Villager is naturally a bit wary of
11. Pupils may see things more clearly with the aid of
13. Now and again it's hard work to secure wicket in this
14. Certain bankers like these to be heavy

Down

1. Heavy ones are inclined to be clumsy
2. This sort of fun is expected by kiddies during Christmas holidays
3. Dad doesn't like them to be treated roughly
5. When a man does this, a little of his pride goes
7. Doing this for a long time is apt to spoil greens
8. Boats need them
10. People staying at hotels aren't usually interested in
12. Was vital factor at Dunkirk

POST ENTRY, ADDRESSED

"BULLETS" 1,661 (or XWORD 613) "JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2 (Comp.).

STICK 2½d. STAMP here to get help of *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Jan. 15, containing **THRILLING NEW "BULLETS" OFFER** If this is your first specimen copy please mark × here ☛

474

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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EXAMPLE .....

BULLET .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

EX. .....

B. .....

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No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

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No..... Closing Postmark, MON., JAN. 3

Signed..... **613**

Address.....

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"JOHN BULL'S" FREE INSURANCE GIFT

COMPREHENSIVE FIRE INSURANCE AND OTHER HOUSEHOLD BENEFITS

***WE WILL PAY** to any Registered Reader of "JOHN BULL" or in the event of death the widow (or widower) of the Registered Reader or in default thereof the Legal Personal Representative:*

FIRE

£1000—against loss by FIRE to the Registered Reader's household furniture or personal effects.

£500—in case of death of husband and wife directly due to injuries caused by an outbreak of fire, involving the Registered Reader's home.

£250—in case of death of either under such circumstances.

£10—for MEDICAL FEES for injuries directly caused by an outbreak of fire involving the Registered Reader's home.

£6—per week for both (or **£3** per week for either) up to 4 weeks for DISABLEMENT under such circumstances.

£2—per week maximum RENT during reinstatement (not exceeding 26 weeks).

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£100—loss caused by explosion of GAS or DOMESTIC BOILERS to the Registered Reader's household furniture or personal effects.

DAMAGE BY LIGHTNING

£300—loss caused by LIGHTNING or THUNDERBOLT to the Registered Reader's household furniture or personal effects.

DAMAGE BY AIRCRAFT

£300—loss caused by CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT (or articles dropped therefrom) to the Registered Reader's household furniture or personal effects.

BURST HOT-WATER PIPES

£100—loss caused by bursting of HOT-WATER PIPES or WATER-HEATING APPARATUS to the Registered Reader's household furniture or personal effects.

DAMAGE TO WIRELESS

£10—for damage by lightning to Registered Reader's Wireless Apparatus (including Aerials and Supports) licensed to and owned by him or her at his or her private address as registered.

ONLY CHILD OF A WIDOW

The unmarried only child (son or daughter) over the age of 15 years of a widow who is a Registered Reader, shall be deemed to be a Registered Reader while he or she is permanently residing with and the sole support of his or her mother.

THESE BENEFITS COME INTO FORCE AS FROM JANUARY 1, 1949

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO READERS.—If you are already a Registered Reader of "John Bull" you automatically qualify for these benefits of "John Bull's" Free Household Security Gift which cancel and supersede all benefits previously in force. You need not re-register unless you have changed your address or newsagent.

Registration forms can be obtained from: Insurance Manager, "John Bull," 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

CONDITIONS (a) This Scheme applies only to Registered Readers, residing in and events occurring in the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man.

(b) A "Registered Reader" shall mean any person over 15 years of age who has paid the appropriate subscription as a Postal Subscriber to "John Bull" or who has personally signed and forwarded to "John Bull's" Registration Department the prescribed Registration Form, and also given a signed order to a retail Newsagent either for the regular and uninterrupted weekly delivery of "John Bull" or for a copy of "John Bull" to be reserved weekly for collection by such reader which has been continuously received from such Newsagent provided always that a Registered Reader over 70 years of age shall be entitled to all the Benefits of this scheme, except those payable in respect of Death or Disablement.

(c) The husband or wife of a Registered Reader permanently residing with him or her shall be deemed to be a Registered Reader for the purpose of the Benefits.

(d) Applications for Benefits in respect of any one event, which must be confined to one of the Benefits, must be forwarded in writing to the **Insurance Manager, "John Bull" 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2** within forty-eight hours. Medical Certificates and/or other evidence in support of the application must be furnished by the applicant at his or her own expense within 90 days of death or loss, as the case may be, together with the Certificate of Registration issued by "John Bull."

(e) Death must result within 90 days after the accident and be solely and directly due to injury. Disablement applies where the reader is totally unable to follow his or her usual employment.

(f) No Benefits under the "Fire" Section will be given if the fire has not been reported on by a Fire Brigade or Police Officer, nor in any event where loss is due to incendiarism, war, riot, or civil commotion. Compensation for material damages or loss will be subject to any rights which the applicant may have or acquire under any other Insurance Scheme, Company or otherwise, and the Proprietors of "John Bull" shall give no Benefit until the Registered Reader has exhausted all such other remedies. In the case of jewellery or furs compensation will be limited to a maximum of £20, which sum shall also be the maximum amount payable for any single item included in the reader's loss. Any misrepresentation or wilful mis-statement of fact shall disqualify an application.

(g) The Fire and other Household Benefits apply to the Registered Reader's household furniture and personal effects at the address registered excepting money in cash or the equivalent in his or her private dwelling-house (being of permanent construction and of a fixed location) or apartments in such dwelling-house or dwelling-rooms which are attached to business premises of the Registered Reader at the address registered, but not to the contents of business premises or stock-in-trade.

(h) To become recipient of Rent Benefit the Registered Reader must either be responsible for and furnish proof of amount of rent, or be beneficial owner, and furnish proof of net rateable assessment, which shall be deemed as rent.

(i) In order to comply with the requirements of the law, the Proprietors of "John Bull" have to announce that while this Free Insurance Scheme does not involve any contractual liability, it has the financial backing and support of Odhams Press Limited (the Proprietors of "John Bull"), whose issued share capital is £1,971,000.

(j) The Proprietors may at any time discontinue or make any amendment to these Benefits and/or Conditions by the publication of a notice in "John Bull", also they reserve the right to refuse or cancel any registration at any time. In any event, these Benefits will terminate at midnight of the 31st December, 1949.

(k) In case of change of address and/or Newsagent, a fresh coupon must be forwarded for registration, for which an acknowledgment must be received, and a fresh Order Form lodged with the Newsagent, otherwise no Benefits will be allowed.

(l) In the event of any dispute between the Reader or any applicant under this Scheme and the Proprietors of "John Bull," the same shall be referred to arbitration in London in accordance with the statutory provisions for the time being in force applicable thereto and the obtaining of an award shall be a condition precedent to any right of action.

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

W. S. (Jarrow): Under the Town and Country Planning Act, land can only be sold at its present usage value, not at a future development price. Before building can start, a development charge must be paid. Those who bought single plots of land before July 1, 1948, when this part of the Act came into force, are exempt from the charge, as they will have purchased at the higher development value. Exemption is not automatic but must be claimed before March 31, 1949, by means of a formal notice to the Central Land Board.

* * *

G. J. (Forest Hill): Right to sickness benefit under the National Insurance Act during any benefit year is dependent upon the number of contributions paid or credited for the preceding contribution year. For example, to be entitled to full sickness benefit in 1949, at least fifty contributions must have been paid or credited for the 1947-48 contribution year.

Answers of general interest are published each week. Send queries (except medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service, 186 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Stamp for reply, please.

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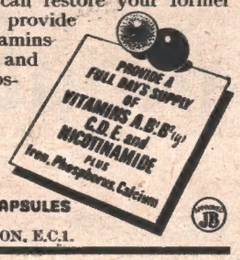

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